THE CREED EXPLAINED

BY

JOSEPH J. BAIERL

"They that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that instruct many unto justice as stars for all eternity" (Daniel xii, 3).

THE CREED EXPLAINED

ACCORDING TO THE

PSYCHOLOGICAL OR MUNICH METHOD

FOR CHILDREN OF THE

INTERMEDIATE GRADES

BASED ON THE BALTIMORE CATECHISM (No. 2)

AN AID TO CATECHISTS

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PREFACE.

The ultimate purpose of Creation is, primarily, the glorification of God. The material universe glorifies the Creator by revealing and proclaiming the divine perfections, by objectively reflecting His majesty. "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (Ps. xviii, 2). But rational creatures have the additional and higher mission of converting this objective glory of the Creator into subjective glorification. They do this in so far as they are moved by the beauty and grandeur of the physical universe to know, love and praise God.[1] Man glorifies God by prayer. In the first three petitions of the Our Father, our Blessed Saviour Himself reminds us of the duty of praying for the promotion of the honor and glory of God on earth as it is in Heaven. "Hallowed be Thy name"—may God be known, loved and honored everywhere; "Thy kingdom come"—may God's love reign in our hearts; may His Church flourish over the whole world and may His glory be advanced by all living on earth; "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven"—may the whole world completely surrender itself to the accomplishment of God's will, even as the heavenly citizens seek nothing else; may God's will be done in us and by us.[2]

But besides the apostleship of prayer, doubtless, a most potent means of furthering the glory of God is the apostolate of the word—the office of preaching and catechizing. To aid catechists, particularly of the lay

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[1]Pohle-Preuss: God, The Author of Nature and The Supernatural, p. 83s; (B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo., 1916).

[2]A. J. Maas S. J.: The Life of Christ, p. 285; (B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo., 1909).

apostolate, in their noble work of instructing and educating the little ones of Christ's flock for the greater honor and glory of God, is the purpose of these catechetical instructions on the Creed. At the same time they would serve as model lessons according to which the catechist may arrange his own instructions as circumstances may dictate.

As regards method these instructions are prepared in accordance with the principles governing the modern **Psychological** or **Munich Method** of catechization. This method, as experience amply testifies, has produced most excellent results.[1]

The Munich Method demands, in the first place, that each lesson should constitute a **Catechetical** or **Methodical Unit**, i. e. should revolve around one theme or unit, which the children should grasp clearly and distinctly. The catechist should strive as far as possible to concentrate the thoughts of his pupils, not to distract them. Hence the need of one theme or unit. Unity is light and power. This does not mean, however, that only one question and answer of the Catechism is to form the subject matter of each lesson. It is often advisable, in connection with the exhaustive treatment of some one question and answer of the Catechism, to touch upon others intimately related to it, though not necessarily in the same thorough manner. Indeed it is possible to treat two different topics or themes in the course of the same lesson, as for instance oaths and vows. They should, however, be sharply differentiated and explained, not indeed together, but one after the other. Conversely, it may sometimes happen, that the treatment of one topic is spread over two consecutive lessons or classes, as for example the questions and ans-

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[1]For a more detailed explanation of this method the reader may profitably consult: Die Münchener Methode by Dr. A. Weber (Jos. Kösel, Kempten & Munich, 1905); The Theory & Practise of the Catechism by Dr. M. Gatterer S. J. & Dr. F. Krus S. J., translated by J. Culemans (Fred. Pustet & Co., N. Y., 1914).

wers on the Church. In other words, a methodical or catechetical unit is determined, not by time, but by internal reasons.

Presupposing, therefore, that due consideration has been given to the mental capacity and the actual knowledge of the child, the catechist should be guided by the following principles in selecting his catechetical unit. 1) Those questions and answers of the Catechism are to be coordinated, which are essentially one; 2) those questions and answers are to be combined into the catechetical unit, which can be illustrated or presented to the pupils by means of a story from life, or the Bible, or by a point from the Liturgy, the Lives of the Saints, or some such objective illustration. For the practical illustration of these rules the reader is referred to the appended model lessons.

In the next place, the Munich Method proceeds from certain well established facts of Psychology. In brief they are the following.

1) The psychological analysis of *the learning process* shows that *the pupil* grasps and assimilates a given subject matter only gradually, and not in one act. He proceeds from apprehension to understanding, and then to application (knowledge, understanding, ability). This threefold process presupposes three corresponding steps on the part of the teacher. In order that the pupil may apprehend a given subject matter, *the teacher* must present that subject matter; in order that the pupil may understand, the teacher must explain the "how" and the "why" of the new subject matter; and finally in order that the pupil may make practical use of the knowledge acquired, the teacher must fix or make that knowledge permanent. Permanence is secured, where knowledge is concerned, by impressing the matter on the mind; and where the will is concerned, by pointing out practical opportunities for the application of the knowledge obtained by the pupil. These fundamental rules of pedagogy, which are grounded in the very nature of things, lie at the basis of the Psychological or Munich Method of catechiza-

tion. Hence this method distinguishes three essential steps: **Presentation, Explanation, Application.**

2) The knowledge of the psychological stages of learning is not sufficient. If *the subject matter to be taught* to the pupil is to be correctly utilized, it *must be developed in a logical manner.* Hence the teacher must correlate the new subject matter to be taught with other knowledge, and in the case of complex matter, he must first analyze it and afterwards synthetize it. Only then can one gain an insight into the mutual relations of things and ensure their comprehension. This process is called *the method of analysis and synthesis.* According to Aristotelian logic analysis goes from the concrete to the abstract; from the fact to the doctrine; from the particular to the general. It takes out or abstracts the essence from the phenomenon, the general from the particular. Synthesis, on the other hand, proceeds from the general to the particular or the composite, or what is the same, from the definition to the concrete. It adds particular modifications to the general concept; it evolves the idea. Whenever we wish to comprehend an object, we use both the analytic and the synthetic processus. Now the Psychological Method of catechization is analytic and synthetic in the above explained sense of those terms. For it proceeds in the Presentation from the concrete, and in the Explanation it passes to the abstract (analytic) ; while in the Application it proceeds from the abstract or general principles to the concrete (synthetic).

3) In every complete human act, that is, in every act that man performs with full consciousness and free will, there are four faculties of the soul operative with greater or less intensity. They are the higher cognitive and appetitive faculties (i. e. the intellect and the will) and the lower cognitive and appetitive faculties (i. e. the imagination or phantasy and the emotions or the passions). The Munich Method demands that both *the cognitive and the appetitive side of the child's nature* be taken into due consideration by the catechist. Sim-

ply to strive to call forth concepts in the pupil's mind (appeal to the intellect) without at the same time setting his appetitive faculties in motion, would be to proceed in a one-sided fashion. The imagination, the emotions or passions and the will go to make up every concept. Consequently the catechist must not only explain to the pupil, for instance the concept of Heaven, but he must endeavor to present a picture of Heaven to the pupil's imagination, even though that picture be imperfect. He must, moreover, communicate this knowledge to the pupil in such a manner, that there is awakened in the pupil's soul a desire for Heaven (appeal to the emotions or passions). At the same time the catechist must strive to lead the pupil to conceive Heaven as something good and worthy of possession (appeal to the will). He must influence both the sensitive and the spiritual parts of the child's nature. Now the Psychological or Munich Method of cathechization takes all of these psychological facts into due consideration. For in the Presentation the catechist appeals to the imagination and the emotions or passions; in the Explanation and Application he appeals to the intellect and the will of the catechumens. Thus every lesson calls the four faculties of the child's soul into operation.

Let us now consider more in detail each of these essential steps of the method.

a) The **Presentation.** This first essential step consists in an objective illustration of the new truth to be learned by the pupil. That is to say, the subject matter to be taught to the pupil in a particular lesson should be presented in such a manner, that the child will see, if not with the eyes of the body, at least with the imagination, that which the catechist expounds. In most cases this *objective presentation* will be obtained by means of a story chosen from the Bible History, or the Lives of the Saints, or Church history, or Liturgy, or, if necessary, also from the daily life of the pupil. Strictly speaking, any other objective illustration may be em-

ployed. Thus, for instance, the objects themselves may be shown to the children; v. g. in the lesson on the veneration of relics the catechist may show the relics of some saint to the children and have them venerate them, or a picture of the relics may be presented. Generally, however, a story or a description will have to be used. Parables should not be employed except in the higher grades.[1] In the lower grades traits from child life are a very desirable means of objective presentation.

The following rules will be of service to the catechist in the matter of selecting illustrations for objective presentation.

1) If the catechetical unit contains *an historical fact*, v. g. the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, the historical fact itself is to be used as the Presentation.

2) If *a doctrinal question*, v. g. What is idolatry? constitutes the subject matter of the lesson, the catechist must endeavor to find a story, in which the concepts contained in the answer to be explained are individually and concretely realized. Thus the Catechism and the story are related to each other as the general to the particular. Now, to illustrate, let us suppose, that the answer to the question: What is idolatry? is stated in these words of the Catechism text: "Idolatry means giving divine honor to a creature as the heathens did". The catechist must, in the first place, select the general or universal concepts from this answer of the Catechism. They are: "divine honor", "creature", "heathens". The catechist must, in the second place, individualize or particularize these universal or general concepts. Therefore he must select a story, in which a "particular" heathen people, gave to a "particular" creature, for instance an idol, a "particular or definite" divine honor. An appropriate story would be the

[1] Ausgeführte Katechesen über die Glaubenslehre, Introduction p. vii, by H. Stieglitz (Jos. Kösel, Kempten & Munich, 1908).

account narrated by the Bible History, in which the heathen Chanaanites offered their infants in sacrifice to the idol Bel. The object lesson should, as far as possible, contain clearly all the concepts of the catechetical unit. If it is not possible to find a story, in which all the elements of the unit are realized (and this will happen only exceptionally), the catechist may supplement the elements that are wanting, by drawing upon the pupil's knowledge by means of psychological analysis or hypothetical questions. For instance, if in the lesson explaining lying the story chosen as an object lesson does not contain all the kinds of lies that may be committed, the catechist may suppose in his Explanation of the story a hypothetical case. He may say: "If the other persons had said so and so—they would not have sinned, because they would have told the untruth without their knowledge". In this way it is possible to extend and develop the object lesson, so that all the elements of the Catechism may be individually realized.

3) Questions, which may not be grouped under the head of questions of fact or questions of doctrine, may be termed *questions of system.* For instance: "What sins may be committed against the Fifth Commandment of God?"; "What are the Ten Commandments of God?"; "What are the attributes of the Church?", etc. These questions do not constitute appropriate subject matter for objective presentation; hence they should be passed over in the Presentation. They may be taken up after the entire lesson has been explained. Thus after having explained the various sins against the Fifth Commandment of God, these sins may be summed up in the answer to the question: "What sins may be committed against the Fifth Commandment of God?" This can be done conveniently in the Synthesis, after the catechist has explained these sins in detail.

The method of teaching by objective presentation, as outlined above, is the shortest way to the understanding of the pupils. What many words cannot ren-

der intelligible, that one can generally make clear by an apt example. It is true, that clear concepts may be obtained also by means of many examples, by comparison. But this is, at least, a more roundabout way, and more difficult for the mental powers of the children. Therefore, as far as possible, one clear and apt object lesson for each catechetical unit. Objective presentation is also the best means of influencing the will of the children. The object lesson may not, however, be too short, for otherwise it cannot touch the heart and the emotions. It takes time for the heart to grow warm.

b) The **Explanation.** The second essential step of the method consists in the explanation of the subject matter presented. The catechist should explain, not the answer of the Catechism, but rather the concrete story of the Presentation, and that by means of the Catechism. Like a sculptor the catechist chisels out of the story or objective illustration the answer of the Catchism. Whenever the Catechism makes use of expressions difficult of understanding, the catechist will employ easier and more familiar words, and then replace them by the words of the Catechism. In the Explanation the catechist should not use general concepts, but should hold fast to the concrete and definite case related in the object lesson. Then he generalizes the example. This transition from the particular and concrete to the general and abstract, the universal, presents no special difficulty. The pupils can make that step easily.

The Explanation, then, never begins with the abstract answer of the Catechism, but with the concrete case mentioned in the Presentation. In the Explanation the catechist reviews step by step the single parts of the Presentation; then he judges the actions that occur in the object lesson; finally he establishes for each point the principles according to which the actions are to be judged. The result is the abstract principle enunciated in the Catechism. To state the matter in another way: in the Presentation the catechist simply shows a picture to the children and asks them to consider it carefully; in the Explanation he begins to point

out the important features of that picture, and tells the children the meaning of the scenes portrayed therein. Therefore the catechist always begins his explanation with the concrete and particular of the picture or description; then he passes judgment on the facts depicted therein; finally he leaves the concrete for the abstract by stating the conclusion—the truth to be held by the pupils concerning the picture or story just presented and explained. For the application of these principles the reader is again referred to the model lessons below.

Besides explaining the words and the concepts of the Catechism the catechist must bring forward *the reasons and arguments* for the doctrine he is explaining. He may also answer any objections that may be urged against the new truth, or he may reserve these answers for the third essential step of the method, the Application. However, it is well to bear in mind, that it is wrong to insist too much on the apologetical or polemic aspects of the doctrine, because this mode of procedure does not specially interest children, and neither can they grasp these reasons very easily. Consequently the catechist should present proofs and arguments from Holy Scripture and the positive teaching of the Church (Tradition). In the course of the explanation the catechist may write the chief doctrinal elements briefly in catch words or phrases on the *blackboard*. This helps to fix the matter in the pupil's memory. It is not, however, essential to the method to use the blackboard, and, therefore, the use of the blackboard may be omitted at the catechist's discretion.

c) The **Application**. The truths just presented and explained should become the lasting possession of the children; hence the purpose of the third essential step of the method. These truths, however, ought not to remain dead capital, but should become fruitful for the daily life of the children. Every class of religious instruction ought to be not merely a class of instruction, but primarily a class of edification, of religious

education and character formation according to the words of St. Paul: "Not the hearers of the law are just before God; but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. ii, 13). Religious truths must not rest in the intellect only, but must become mighty impulses, which urge the catechumens to fulfil what those truths teach. "Enlighten the intellect, inflame the affections, so that being made worthy, attentive and devoted to God our catechumens may be able to fulfil their duties"—that ought to be the watchword of every catechist.[1] Hence the purpose of the Application is to train the religious understanding and will of the catechumens. In order *to educate the understanding* the catechist may allude to stories already known to the pupils, in which the truths just explained are illustrated, or he may adduce new examples and thus sharpen the judgment of the children. He may also answer any objections against the truths just explained, and let the children endeavor to solve these difficulties in the light of the explanation given by the catechist. In this way the teacher will be able to see whether the pupils have grasped aright the truths imparted to them. In order *to train the will* of the catechumens, the catechist may ask the children to compare their lives with the new truths—hence examination of conscience. He may allude to the consequences of evil and to the glorious reward of virtue, in order that thereby the truth may take firm hold of the pupils' minds and hearts. The class may close with a succint motto, or a profession of faith in the doctrine just imparted, or the exercise of the virtue treated in the class, or a strong and sincere good resolution, or with an appropriate prayer or hymn.

Every catechetical instruction arranged according to the Psychological or Munich Method must contain these three essential steps. This is the natural way.

[1]Dritter Münchener Katechetische Kurs, 1909. Address by Dr. Jos. Göttler, Religiöse Erziehung u. katechetische Methode. (Freising.)

Whether in a particular class the catechist unites the Presentation with the Explanation, or the Explanation with the Application, is a matter of secondary concern. The chief thing is to accord to these necessary steps their full rights.

Besides these three essential steps the Munich Method adds three non-essential steps for formal reasons, i. e. for the psychological purpose of urging the children to self-activity, without which all instruction remains fruitless. These non-essential steps are: Preparation, Aim and Synthesis. A word about each.

a) The **Preparation.** What is the purpose of the Preparation?—Apperception or association plays an important part in the learning process. By apperception is meant the adding of new images and concepts to the old images and concepts already latent in the child's soul. Just as soon as the child hears something new, its soul becomes active: old images and concepts arise within its consciousness and greet the new ones, make friends with them, as it were, and unite with one another. Consequently the first question in a cathechetical instruction will always be: "What do the children already know of the new subject matter to be communicated to them?" Accordingly the Preparation is always a repetition or review either of the knowledge already possessed by the pupils or of the previous lesson. This review should repeat not only the doctrinal contents, but especially the resolutions of the foregoing lesson. It should be a cultivation not of the memory of the words only, but rather of the memory of the will. The catechist, then, must proceed according to the well known axiom: "From the known to the unknown." He will, therefore, show the connection between the new subject matter to be imparted and the foregoing lesson. If he is to employ a scene from some Bible story, he will refresh briefly whatever knowledge the children may possess concerning that particular story; thus the characters will not appear as utter strangers to the children. Moreover, in

the Preparation the teacher may explain briefly whatever points are absolutely necessary for the first understanding of the new subject matter, as for instance, unknown words or customs, that will come up for treatment in the course of the Presentation or Explanation.

b) The **Aim**. The pupils must know whither the catechist would lead them, even though the way be as yet unknown. The Aim, the second non-essential step of the Munich Method, is the star that will shine upon them as they proceed on the way. Thus their thoughts will not be so easily distracted. The Aim ought to appear to the children like the Promised Land to which they are tending. Hence it should produce in their hearts a certain tension or expectancy. It is well to repeat the Aim of the lessson from time to time in the course of the lesson. However, it is not necessary to state the Aim in precise terms: it suffices to allude to the subject matter to be treated in the lesson of the day.

c) The **Synthesis**. This third non-essential step follows upon the Explanation. In the course of the Explanation, as stated above, the catechist has written the chief doctrinal elements of the lesson on the blackboard. This brief survey helps the children to remember the truths proposed and, at the same time, the wording of the Catechism-text. After the Explanation the purpose of the instruction has been attained. Now the truths learned are to be *reviewed*. This takes place in the Synthesis. The catechist by careful questioning draws forth from the pupils the doctrinal elements of the lesson, and the pupils put them together in the words of the Catechism. Thereupon the Catechism-text may be read aloud by the children. No further explanation of the words of the text will be necessary. Moreover, the work of memorizing the text will no longer cause special difficulty, for in most cases the more capable pupils, at least, will have learned a great part of the answers by heart. In the course of the process called the Synthesis the catechist may easily

learn, whether the children have grasped his Explanation correctly. The children, on the other hand, will have begun to realize, that what they will be expected to commit to memory, is not so much after all, in spite of the long Presentation and Explanation. They will rejoice, because they will be conscious that they have mastered the new truths. Consequently the Synthesis and the other non-essential steps are indispensible from a formal viewpoint before passing on to the other steps.

To sum up: the order of procedure according to the Psychological or Munich Method is as follows: *Preparation, Aim, Presentation, Explanation, Synthesis, Application.*

The Presentation is almost exclusively the work of the catechist. He lectures—the pupils listen or look at the pictures or objects he presents. However, if the Presentation is taken from the Bible History and is known very well to the children, they may be permitted to read the story from their books. Generally, however, it is preferable to have the catechist narrate the story, especially if it be necessary to enlarge or abridge it. Beginning with the Explanation the children take an active part. The truths are obtained by dialogue between the teacher and the pupils. We have omitted this detailed elaboration of question and answer, in order not to expand this book beyond due limits. The catechist should also, whenever possible, introduce references to the Liturgy. Many practical associations will thereby be formed, which will be productive of excellent results.

We have purposely omitted to outline the necessary qualifications of the catechist, because we are dealing here exclusively with the method. Let the catechist, however, be firmly convinced that the ultimate results, apart from the grace of God, depend not so much on the method or the subject matter, as primarily upon the catechist himself. If he would educate a child "to grow unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age

of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv, 13), he himself must first have sat at the feet of the Divine Teacher and imbibed His spirit and warmed his heart at the fires that burn within the Sacred Heart.

While advocating the Psychological or Munich Method of catechization, we do not wish to leave the impression that we reject the other method, which starts with the question and answer of the Catechism. We refer to the so-called "old analytic method" (explanatory analysis in the sense of the old *pedagogic* concept of ideas). This method begins with a catechetical thesis (the catechetical question and answer), resolving or dissecting the Catechism text (text analysis) into its component parts to explain them in succession and apply them to life and conscience.[1] On the contrary, when there is question of review or repetition in the formal sense, i. e. when the pupils are already sufficiently well acquainted with the subject matter, it certainly is not necessary to treat the matter as though it were entirely unknown to them. In such cases we recommend the use of the old analytic method (definition with illustrations). Real instruction makes use of both ways of teaching. It is now analytic-synthetic, then synthetic-analytic. However, for first concept formation the Psychological Method is the natural process.

The catechetical instructions presented in this volume are intended for children of the intermediate grades (fourth or fifth approximately), who are studying the Baltimore Catechism (No. 2) for the first time. They are largely an adaptation of the excellent work of H. Stieglitz: Ausgeführte Katechesen über die katholische Glaubenslehre (5' edition, 1908, Jos. Kösel, Kempten & Munich). They are designed to supplement Carl Bühlmayer's: Ausgeführte Katechesen für das erste Schuljahr der katholischen Volksschule (Jos. Kösel,

[1]Meyenberg-Brossart: Homiletic & Catechetic Studies, pp. 777, (F. Pustet & Co.; N. Y.; 1914).

Kempten & Munich, 1906), which has been translated in part by Rev. A. Urban under the title of "Easy Catechetics for the First School Year" (Jos. Wagner, N. Y.; 1910) and J. Nist's: Methodisch Ausgeführte Katechesen über den Glauben (F. Schöningh, Paderborn, 1911) translated by Rev. F. Girardey, C. SS. R. under the title of "The Practical Catechist" (B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo.)

We have laid the following works under contribution, which we subjoin as a reference Bibliography for the catechist. Pohle-Preuss: God: His Knowability, Essence and Attributes; God: The Author of Nature and the Supernatural; The Divine Trinity; Christology; Soteriology; Mariology; Eschatology (B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo., 1914-17); A. Divine: The Creed Explained (R. & T. Washbourne, London, 1908); F. Spirago & R. Clarke, S. J.: The Catechism Explained (Benzinger Bros., N. Y.); F. Spirago & J. Baxter: Anecdotes and Examples Illustrating the Catholic Catechism (Benzinger Bros., N. Y.); A. J. Maas S. J.: The Life of Christ (B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo., 1909); P. Power: Catechism, Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, Liturgical (J. Duffy Co., Dublin); Thos. L. Kinkead: An Explanation of the Baltimore Catechism (Benzinger Bros., N. Y.); W. Faerber & F Girardey, C. SS. R.: Commentary on the Catechism (B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo., 1906); Mary MacMahon: Short Stories on Christian Doctrine (Benzinger Bros., N. Y., 1883); Josephine Van Dyke Brownson: To the Heart of the Child (The Encyclopedia Press, N. Y., 1918); Geo. Howe: The Catechist, vol. I (R. Washbourne, London 1898); D. Chisholm: The Catechism in Examples, vol. I (T. Washbourne, London, 1908); J. G. Wenham: The Catechumen (St. Anselm's Society, 9 Agar St., London, 1892); C. Muff, O. S. B.: Katechesen für die vier obern Klassen der Primarschule (Benzinger Bros., N. Y., 1910); Dr. J. Schmitt: Erklärungen des mittleren Deharbschen Katechismus (10' edition, 1902, B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo.); Dr. R. Baumeister: Katechesen über den mittleren Katechismus

(B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo., 1904); Dr. J. Klug: Der katholische Glaubensinhalt (F. Schöningh, Paderborn, 1915); L. Mehler: Beispiele, vol. I (19' edition, G. Manz, Ratisbon); Fr. W. Foerster: Jugendlehre (G. Reimer, Berlin, 1912); Katechetische Bläetter (Jos. Kösel, Kempten & Munich) passim. The supplementary Chart illustrating the leading Christian Denominations is an adaptation of the Chart appended to Edgar: Or From Atheism to the Full Truth by Louis v. Hammerstein, S. J. (B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo., 1908).

May the blessing of the Divine Friend of little children accompany this work on its journey for the greater honor and glory of God.

THE AUTHOR.

Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1919,
Rochester, N. Y.

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THE CREED EXPLAINED

LESSON I.

The End and Purpose of Man's Existence.

Catechetical Unit:

Why did God make you? L. I., Q. 6.

(N. B. To obtain satisfactory results it is very necessary that the catechist study carefully the principles governing the Psychological or Munich Method outlined in the Preface).

Preparation. Dear children, this great world round about us is filled with all sorts of beautiful things. The green grass covers the earth like a rich carpet; plants of all shapes and sizes grow in abundance. The grass and the plants serve as food for men and animals. The trees offer us cool shade in the heat of the summer; they give us their fruits for nourishment and their wood for fire and for many other purposes. There are also living beings—animals in the woods, in the fields, and in the houses. Some of these help us to work, others give us their skins and feathers for clothing. They are all here for a purpose. Everything in the world exists for man. God Himself said so: "Let us make man to our image and likeness and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth; and every creeping thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. i, 26).

But let us inquire further. Why is man here? Why are your parents here? Why are your teachers here? Why are the priests here? They are in this world to

help you to become useful children of this world, but more especially to assist you to become good children of God. Why are you here? You want to become big and strong and rich, able and learned. That is the reason why your parents sent you to school. You have already learned much and you will continue to go to school for many more years, so that you may become learned and useful men and women. When you grow up and are old enough to work, you will learn some trade or business, so that you may earn money for your parents and for yourselves. But after you have grown into strong men and women, what then? If a person has become rich and has obtained much wealth, what then? If a man has become learned, what then? Has he already arrived at the end of his journey? Oh, no! we are made for a much higher end or purpose; we have a far nobler end.

Aim. Today I want you to think seriously about this very important question: Why did God make you? Indeed many people do not know the answer to this question, or at least they live as though they were ignorant of the correct answer. I am going to tell you a story of a young man, who did not know the purpose of his existence here, but who finally learned the truth. *(Use the blackboard; see diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Presentation. A certain young man once came to St. Philip Neri and begged for an alms (a help). The saint gave it to him, at the same time, however, inquiring what he intended to become. The young man's face flushed with excitement as he replied with great fervor: "At last my heart's desire is fulfilled. I am allowed to study to become a lawyer. My parents have given their consent. Now I will spare no pains, but intend to study and work with great zeal, so that I may soon finish my studies."

St. Philip was a man of few words; so he listened quietly to the young man and then he asked him in a friendly manner: "And what then"? The young man

replied: "Then I shall become a great lawyer". "And then?" the saint asked again. "Then? Then I shall earn a great deal of money by my persuasive tongue. The people will flock to me in great numbers to have me defend their cases in court". "And then?" the saint asked again. "Then? Then I shall buy a fine house on the principal street of the city and I shall own a carriage and horses. Then I shall get married and settle down in a comfortable home and spend my days in happiness and contentment". St. Philip again asked dryly: "And then?" "Then?" replied the young man; but he got no further in his answer. His countenance fell and he seemed to have reached the end of his wisdom. Suddenly dark clouds arose in his soul,—thoughts of death, and the coffin, and the grave, and eternity. "Then?—Then, of course at last I must die". "And then?" the saint asked again very earnestly, "what will you do, when the last trial will take place, in which you yourself will be the accused, Almighty God the judge, and the sentence will be spoken: Heaven or Hell"?

The young man stood speechless as though struck by lightning. Those terrible words "What then?" sunk deeply into his soul. He went away with downcast eyes and heavy heart. Night and day those two words followed him like his own shadow; he was unable to put them out of his mind. Soon after he left the world and entered a convent, where he spent his days in learning more and more about God and the other life. He served God faithfully day after day by leading a pious and virtuous life. Finally when death came it found him ready, for he had learned the correct answer to that very important question: Why did God make you?

Explanation. 1. The story which I have just related to you, dear children, contains a most instructive lesson for you all. What did this young man wish to become? A learned and prominent lawyer, rich, happy and prosperous in this world. That was the one desire of his heart, the one purpose he had in mind. He dreamed

only of a happy life upon this earth, as though he could remain here always; he did not look further. St. Philip listened quietly to what the young man was saying. I wonder what he was thinking about? "Poor young man! How can you be so blind? You talk like an ignorant child." Are we made for this world? No; this world is our home for a time only; our eternal home is Heaven. We must get to Heaven at any cost. We shall find true happiness and rest only with God, the source of all joy and happiness. St. Augustine, the great bishop of Hippo in Africa, once said: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our heart will not rest until it rests in Thee". Our Catechism says: **God made us to be happy with Him forever in Heaven.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. The young man in the story was thinking only of this world. He wanted to become a great lawyer. He was willing to work night and day at his books, if only he could one day know enough to be a successful lawyer. He did not think very much about God. He did not strive to know God better and better. He forgot the most important lesson of life. What is that lesson? St. John tells us (xvii, 3): "Now this is eternal life; that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." **God made us to know Him.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Gradually, however, with the help of God's grace this young man learned true wisdom. He spent his time in learning to know God. He considered God's goodness to us and the blessings He holds out to everyone who really loves Him. He listened attentively to the priest speaking of God in the sermons and instructions on Sundays and Holy days of obligation. He meditated devoutly day by day on the greatness and goodness of God. That is the great truth that we all must learn—God made us to know Him.

3. If that young man had continued to live as he had intended to live, namely, for this world only, do you think that he would have reached the end for which

God made him? I am afraid that he would in the end have lost the last case in the court before the heavenly Judge, Jesus Christ, and would himself have been sentenced to the prison of unending torments. That is the reason why St. Philip asked him repeatedly the self-same question: "What then"? Finally the young man's eyes were opened. What did he see? "If I wish to be truly happy for time and for eternity, I must live for the next world, for God; I must love God with all my heart and I must serve Him every day of my life." And how did he show that he really loved God and served Him? By keeping God's commandments, by striving with all his heart and strength to fulfil God's will. Yes, let us never forget this great truth: **God made us to love and serve Him in this world.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. The young man finally showed that he was in dead earnest. He left the world and joined a religious community. That was not indeed absolutely necessary; for he might have saved his soul also by living for God in the world. However, he said to himself: "If I become a religious, I can obtain the end of my existence more surely and easily." Dear children, our lives must be a continual service of God. Our Blessed Saviour Himself has said so: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things will be added unto you." (Mat. vi, 33); again He says: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" (Mat. xii, 26).

Many people think that to lead a pious Christian life is the same as to lead a sad and unhappy life. Do you think that the young man was unhappy, because he served God faithfully to the end of his life? No, indeed; he chose the better part; for whoever serves God faithfully in this world has a foretaste of Heaven even in this world. Money, friends, pleasures and honors cannot satisfy the human heart. All these things are like soap bubbles. You have already played at making soap bubbles. How they sparkle and glitter in the

bright sunlight! But lo! a gust of wind comes—and all the glory is gone; nothing is left but a drop of dirty water. So it is with all the riches and pleasures and honors of this world. They glitter and shine for a time; but at death they cease and the richest and most prosperous man cannot take a single penny with him into eternity. You know in the shroud, which clothes a corpse, there are no pockets. If a man does not love and serve God in this life, he will appear as a beggar in the next life. It is only by knowing and loving and serving God in this world, by working for Heaven, that we can be truly happy for time and for eternity. Therefore resolve to serve God faithfully on earth, that you may be happy with Him forever in Heaven.

Write on the blackboard:

Purpose of life— { to know / to love—*God—Heaven.* / to serve }

Synthesis. Now let us review briefly what we have learned about that young man. Of what was he thinking when he came to St. Philip? Of the present life or of the next world? Why did God make you? What is your true home? What did the young man want to know? What should he have striven to know? What did the young man love and whom was he serving? Whom should we love and serve? *(Have the children read the answer from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Dear children, let us look about the world to see how the children of this world live and act. Do they keep the purpose and end of their existence always before their eyes? Is their whole life a service of God Almighty? Oh, no! most people are real worldlings. They act as the busy Martha did. You know the story. Once Jesus paid a visit to the house of the two sisters, Mary and Martha. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened attentively to every

word of the Divine Master. Martha, on the contrary, busied herself every moment with setting things in order and with preparing the dinner for Jesus. She took no time to listen to the teachings of Jesus. The Lord, therefore, said to her: "Martha, Martha, thou art busy about many things; but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the best part" (Luke x, 38s). Most people of the world act just as the busy Martha. They are so occupied with the things of this world, that they have no time left for God and the next world. They have no time to pray; they are too busy to go to church; they have no time to go to confession and to receive Holy Communion. For everything else they have plenty of time, but not one moment for God and for their immortal souls. Jesus looking down upon them from Heaven must say: "O! you foolish children of this world: you are solicitous for many things. Only one thing is necessary—to serve God and thereby to be happy with Him forever in Heaven." Never forget this lesson.

2. The people of this world sometimes remind me of a spider. The spider works and labours untiringly for days spinning its web. Why does it spin its web? It wants to catch a fly and to feast on its body. But lo! the mother sees the cobweb and sweeps it away, and poor spider loses its life. Just so many people labor for years to amass or gather riches, to enjoy the pleasures and honors of this world. Suddenly death comes and with its broom sweeps away all. Where then are all the labors and pains of these people? All have been in vain. Therefore every man who forgets this very important lesson of life is a fool.

3. Now examine your consciences and ask yourselves sincerely: "How have I lived up to the present time? Have I really sought to know and love and serve God? Have I not preferred the world and its pleasures to God and to the happiness of Heaven?" A certain learned and holy priest once said: "Upon the gravestone of most people must be written these words: Here

lies a foolish man, who did not know why he lived." Dear children, if you were to die at this very moment, would not this same inscription have to be written on your tombstone: "Here lies a foolish child, who did not know why it lived?" Is it not true, that you must fear for your past life? If so, then resolve to change your life. Now let us fold our hands and say with all our hearts: "O, Jesus! I resolve with Thy holy grace to try with all my strength to serve Thee and to reach Heaven, cost what it may. No price is too high to pay for God and for Heaven. Help me with Thy grace. Amen."

LESSON II.

Man's Chief Duty in Life.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Of which must we take more care, our soul or our body? L. I., Q. 7.

2) Why must we take more care of our soul than of our body? L. I., Q. 8.

3) What words should we always bear in mind? L. XXXVII, Q. 421.

4) What must we do to save our souls? L. I., Q. 9.

Preparation. Dear children, the Bible History tells us that the chosen people of God, the Israelites, were led away from Palestine into Babylon as exiles by their enemies. The Prophet Daniel was with them. Every day this holy man used to open the window of his house in Babylon, that looked towards the city of Jerusalem. The Holy City was far away indeed; but it was the chief city of his native country and the home he loved. The very thought of that city was a comfort to him in his exile. Dear children, the heavenly Jerusalem is our home. We were made for it, and the earth is our land of exile. The very thought of Heaven ought to rejoice us here on earth. Let us, therefore, never lose

sight of the end for which God has made us. *(Review the preceding lesson briefly by appropriate questioning).* Dear children, if God has made us for such a noble end and purpose, there is a grave obligation or duty on us all of doing our level best to get to Heaven.

Aim. Today I am going to tell you this most important duty of life. I am going to speak to you about the great value of our souls and what we must do to save them.

Presentation. In a certain city of Poland on the 18th day of October, 1550, a little baby boy was born into this world, who was destined to become a great saint in God's Church. His name was Stanislaus Kostka. This little child could have had all that his heart desired, for his parents were wealthy. But Stanislaus, even as a child, despised all these things, and when he grew up to be a young man, he resolved to renounce all, in order to become a poor religious. When his friends heard of his design, they tried to turn him away from his good resolution. They pointed out to him the beautiful lands, the magnificent palace and the great wealth that one day were to fall to his lot. They placed all these riches before his eyes. Stanislaus did indeed look at them, but he also looked away from them to higher things. "My friends," he said to them one day, "these things are indeed beautiful, but I was born for higher things. God, my Father in Heaven, has made me to possess the eternal riches of Heaven, and to see Him there forever. Therefore I keep my eyes fixed on Heaven, that I may not allow them to become blinded by earthly things, which are so vile and worthless, when compared with the eternal things of Paradise."

St. Stanislaus loved to pray and to think of God and the saints. He kept the words of Jesus always before his mind: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mat. xvi, 26). Every Sunday and Holy day of obligation this holy

youth received the Bread of Angels in Holy Communion. He never went to school in the morning or afternoon without first paying a visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He assisted at two Masses daily. If any unbecoming word was let fall in his presence, he would leave the company at once. He was a living example of virtue to every one about him. When only seventeen years old he left his home and all the riches that were one day to be his, and entered the Society of Jesus. After a few months spent in the convent Stanislaus fell sick and during the night of the fourteenth and the morning of the fifteenth of August, 1568, his spotless soul was led by angels into the eternal joys of Heaven.

Explanation. 1. Dear children, St. Stanislaus is an example for all of us. He had all that this heart could desire—good parents, a happy home, plenty of wealth, pleasures and honors. And yet, he did not set his heart on these things. He did not spend his time in trying to satisfy the longings of his body—in feasting and pleasure-seeking, in fine clothing, in laying up riches for himself and his family. On the contrary, he turned his eyes away from the body and the things of the body and looked at his soul. That was worth infinitely more to him than his body. Therefore he spent his time in caring for his soul by keeping it always pure and holy in God's sight. That is the chief duty of our life. **We must take more care of our soul than of our body.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. The friends of Stanislaus called his attention to the great riches that one day would be his; but the saintly boy replied in those beautiful words: "I was born for higher things." He knew that all the wealth, pleasures and honors of this world are vile and worthless when compared with the eternal things of the soul. They cannot last forever; we must leave them all together with the body at the grave. But the soul lives on forever. If we neglect to care for our soul by

committing sin and by living only for the body and the things of the body, we cannot see God in Heaven; we shall never enjoy the happiness which God has prepared for all those that love Him. We shall lose our souls. You see, therefore, why we must take more care of the soul than of the body, for **if we lose our soul we lose God and everlasting happiness.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. St. Stanislaus kept certain words of Our Blessed Lord always in mind. Especially when he was tempted to enjoy the things of the body did he think of Christ's words. These words he had heard in the Catechism class and in the sermons on many occasions. What were they? They are the following: **What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul? or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His angels; and then will He render to every man according to his works.''** *(Repeat together.)* Dear children, you too must always bear these words in mind. They will tell you how foolish it is to forget the soul and to care only for the body.

4. This little Polish boy showed by his life that he really thought more of his soul than of his body. He thought of God and of Heaven every day of his life. He had, of course, never seen God in Heaven. But he had heard the priest, God's messenger, speak about God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost; he had often listened to the priest speak about Heaven and Hell, about sin and grace. He knew that God Himself had spoken all these truths. The Catholic Church told all these truths to him in God's own name. Stanislaus could not understand these teachings with his little mind; and yet, because God spoke them, he held that they must be true, for God can neither deceive nor be deceived. He believed. He listened attentively to God speaking to him through the Catholic Church. Then he bowed his head reverently and said: "O God! whatever Thou sayest is true; even though I cannot under-

stand, I believe." Stanislaus worshiped God by faith. To save our souls, we must worship God by faith, that is, we must believe in Him. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Dear children, here is a little boy, who has just returned from school. "My little man," I say to him, "what did you learn at school today?" "I learned how to count," was his bright answer. "Well, then, tell me, how much two and two are." "Four," he replied at once. "Do you believe that?" I asked him. "Certainly I do," he replied, "for the teacher said so." Do you see? This boy believed *because his teacher said so,* and surely the teacher ought to know. Now, dear children, let me ask you another question: "Do you believe that twice four are eight?" "How do you know that twice four are eight?" "Why, it must be so; it cannot be otherwise." You believe, *because your reason tells you.* Now just one more question: "What kind of weather are we going to have tomorrow?" You say: "We believe that it is going to be just as fine as today." Do you know that with certainty? No, you do not; but *you think, you guess,* that we shall have fine weather. You see, therefore, that there are three kinds of faith. Now, tell me, what kind of faith must a Catholic have, who wishes to be saved? A Catholic must believe just as that little boy I just spoke to you about. God tells us the truths of our holy religion, and we believe them just because He has spoken them to us. He tells them to us through the Catholic Church, our teacher. That is the kind of faith that St. Stanislaus had.

Almighty God has told us many truths, which we cannot grasp with our little minds. And yet, because God has spoken them, we believe. Is it a hard thing for us to believe the truths of our holy religion? Let us see. A gardener places a little seed in the earth. After a short while it springs up into a plant and produces fruit. So too, the heavenly gardener, the Holy Ghost, placed a little seed in the heart of St. Stanislaus on the

occasion of his Baptism. This little boy did not know anything about the truths of his religion at that time; for he was too small to understand anything. But that ought not to surprise us; for Stanislaus had feet and could not walk; he had a tongue and could not speak. In the course of time, however, Stanislaus grew bigger. His mother spoke to him about God, the Father; about Jesus Christ; about the Blessed Virgin, the Guardian Angel and many other beautiful truths. Stanislaus loved to listen to his mother telling him these truths. He believed his mother. Do you see, Stanislaus began to believe. The Holy Ghost helped him. Then he went to school and there he heard the priest speak about our dear Lord and about heavenly things in the Catechism class. He heard the priest speak of these truths in the sermon on Sundays. He believed. When he received the Sacrament of Confirmation the Holy Ghost came to him again in a very special way and made his faith stronger. The little seed of Divine Faith became a plant and produced fruit. So it is with all of us. All the truths of our holy religion come from God and God Himself helps us to believe them. You see, therefore, that Divine Faith is a gift, a grace, which you have received, when you were made God's children at Baptism. Thank God for this heavenly blessing.

5. Let us think of Stanislaus again. This little boy kept his mind fixed on God and Heaven. "I am born for higher things," he repeated to himself every day. "If I serve God faithfully on earth, He will take me to Himself in Heaven when I die. That is my true home. O! what joys await me there. God Himself has said so. I know that He will keep His promise. I hope in God." St. Stanislaus, therefore, hoped in God; he worshiped God by hope. God wants us all to do just what this saintly little boy did. **To save our souls we must worship God by hope, that is, we must hope in Him.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Is it difficult for us to hope in God? No, for God

has made it easy for us to hope. He has placed Divine Hope in our hearts just like Divine Faith, when we were baptized. As we grow older many a storm and temptation will rage against us. But if we look up to Heaven, we shall see the bright star of hope shining there above the storm and calling out to us to trust in God and His promises. Never lose courage in the struggle. Trust in God and all will be well.

6. Dear children, St. Stanislaus did not only believe in God and hope in Him; he did more than that. He loved to pray; to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; to read about God and Heaven. He hated sin with all his heart. He kept the Commandments of God faithfully. He loved God above all things—he worshiped God by charity. If we wish to save our souls, we must imitate his example. **To save our souls we must worship God by charity, that is, we must love Him with all our heart.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

It is not hard to love God above all things, for God has placed Divine Charity in our hearts just like Divine Faith and Hope, when we were baptized. These three gifts of God are called *the three Divine Virtues* (the theological virtues). Divine Charity is stronger than all our wicked passions and all the powers of the world and of Hell. This gift of God helps us to turn our backs upon all the riches and pleasures of the world just as St. Stanislaus did and with hearts and eyes raised heavenwards to say: "O God! I love Thee above all things." What then must we do to save our souls? *(Repeat the entire answer as it is in the Catechism).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. We must take more care of *our soul* than of our body.
2. Our soul made *for God and Heaven.*
3. To save our soul we must
   a) *believe* in God (Divine Faith);
   b) *hope* in God (Divine Hope);
   c) *love* God (Divine Charity).

Synthesis. Today we have learned the most important duty of life. Of what did St. Stanislaus take more care, of his soul or of his body? What words did he say, when his friends tried to tempt him? Why did he take more care of his soul than of his body? What words did our Lord say about this most important duty of life? What is the first thing we must do, in order to save our souls? When did we receive Divine Faith? In what Sacrament is Divine Faith made stronger? Whither did Stanislaus turn his eyes when his friends tempted him? What did he expect from God? What is another words for "trusting?" When did you receive the virtue of Divine Hope? Why did Stanislaus do good and avoid evil? When did we receive the gift of Divine Charity? What do we call these three heavenly gifts? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Our Blessed Saviour reminds us of the chief duty of life in a certain similitude or story, which he once told to the Jews. "The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruit. And he thought within himself, saying: "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" And he said: "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and will build greater: and into them will I gather all things, that are grown to me, and my goods, and I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer." But God said to him: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee, and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" (Luke xii, 16s). How foolish it is, dear children, to neglect the care of your soul for the sake of satisfying the body! Resolve to guard the rich treasure of your soul, for if you lose that you lose all.

2. While in Paris St. Ignatius, the founder of a religious order called the Society of Jesus, became acquainted with a certain nobleman named Francis

Xavier. Francis was a man filled with ambition and thoroughly worldly; but Ignatius saw many good qualities in him and therefore resolved to turn his thoughts from earth to Heaven. From time to time, while conversing with Francis, St. Ignatius would repeat the words of our Blessed Saviour: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul; or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" (Mat. xvi, 26). Francis at first listened with contempt, but gradually he began to think seriously of the meaning of these words, which he had heard so often. He applied them to his own case. "What will it profit me," he said to himself, "if I obtain my ambitions and in the end lose my own soul?" By the grace of God his eyes were opened to the truth. He placed himself under the direction of St. Ignatius and soon became a great saint and the glorious apostle of the Indies. His feast is celebrated on the third of December. Dear children, always bear these golden words of Jesus in your mind and heart.

3. Faith, Hope and Charity are the three Divine or Theological Virtues. You all received them on the occasion of your Baptism. It is Christ's will, that you grow strong in those virtues. Let us recite the acts of Faith, Hope and Charity.

"O my God! I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; I believe that Thy Divine Son became man, and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, Who canst neither deceive nor be deceived."

"O my God! relying on Thy infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon for my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer."

"O my God! I love Thee above all things with my whole heart and soul, because Thou art all good and

worthy of my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen."

LESSON III.

The Catholic Church—The Teacher of God's Word.

Catechetical Unit:

1) How shall we know the things which we are to believe? L. I., Q. 10.
2) Where shall we find the chief truths which the Church teaches? L. I., Q. 11.
3) Say the Apostles' Creed. L. I., Q. 12.

Preparation. Dear children, if we serve the passing things of the body and of this world, and them alone, it were better that we had never been born. If, on the contrary, we live for the eternal things, for God and the soul, we shall pass from this vale of tears into the bright and eternal land of Paradise, our true home. *(Review the preceding lesson briefly).* But how can we get to Heaven? The journey is long and there are many dangers and enemies hiding on the way. "How narrow is the gate," says Jesus Himself, "and strait is the way that leadeth to life; and how few there are who find it"! (Mat. vii, 14). We need a guide to point out the way. Did God give us such a guide and teacher? Yes, thank God, from the very beginning the good Lord sent teachers to show men the way to Heaven. In the Old Testament God sent Moses and the Prophets; in the New Testament He sent us His own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, from Heaven. But Jesus departed from this world on Ascension Thursday. He left His Apostles to be our teachers and guides. But the Apostles finally died. Is there then no other Guide and Teacher to show us the way to eternal life?

Aim. Today I am going to tell you about this Teacher

and Guide, whom Jesus left us to show us how to reach our true home beyond the stars.

Presentation. You know how Jesus taught the people in the Holy Land. He went about from place to place preaching the Gospel of salvation. He Himself went ahead and showed the people the way to Heaven. He said to them: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John xiv, 6). After His sermons to the people Jesus retired into a quiet and secluded place away from the noisy crowd. There He gathered His Apostles about Him and explained more in detail the truths, that He had come to earth to teach. Why did He do this? The Apostles were to take His place. They were to go into the whole world and teach the Gospel to all nations. Therefore, before leaving them He gave them His last command: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Mat. xxviii. 19). The Apostles fulfilled this command of Christ most faithfully. On Pentecost they were filled with the power of the Holy Ghost. Then they separated from one another and went as missionaries into foreign lands to preach the word of Jesus to Jews and Gentiles. They preached whatever they had heard and seen concerning Jesus, and many people believed them and became Christians.

The Apostles are dead; but their teachings are not dead. Other men succeeded the Apostles and continued their work. They are the Bishops of Christ's Church. These successors of the Apostles were the pastors and rulers of the Church. They preached the very same truths untiringly and spread Jesus' Gospel broadcast over the earth. So it has continued down to our own day. The Church has always preserved the whole of God's word and still preserves it most carefully as a precious treasure. The Pope and the Bishops, the pastors and rulers of Christ's Church, continue to preach and to send forth priests to teach the people. They continue to send forth missionaries into heathen countries, to lead the people to Christ and to Heaven.

In the course of time the pastors and rulers of the Church gathered together in short form the chief doctrines of the Apostles. This short outline of our Faith is called the Apostles' Creed. It has always been a mark by which a man might be recognized as a Christian. Converts to the Faith were obliged to recite it before Baptism. No one was admitted to assist at Holy Mass, unless he knew the Creed by heart.

Explanation. 1. Dear children, when a father dies the children inherit the things that belonged to their father. When Jesus left this world, He handed over to His beloved Apostles a rich inheritance, namely God's word, Divine Revelation. You know by what words Jesus handed over this gift to His Apostles. "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations". That was Jesus' last will and testament. But God's word, the holy doctrines of Jesus, were not to cease with the death of the Apostles. To whom did the Apostles commit the precious inheritance of Jesus' doctrines? The successors of the Apostles are still alive. They are the Pope and the Bishops, the pastors and rulers, of the Catholic Church. They are the ones who guard the teachings of Jesus as a most precious treasure and teach those truths to all men. God Himself is with the Church, when she teaches us the word of God or Divine Revelation. For Jesus has said: "Behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" (Mat. xxviii, 20). How then shall we know the truths we are to believe? **We shall know the things which we are to believe from the Catholic Church, through which God speaks to us.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see diagram below just above the synthesis).*

The Pope and the Bishops are called *the teaching Church,* because they teach us in God's name all the truths we must believe, in order to be saved. God's word or Divine Revelation is, therefore, in the safekeeping of the Catholic Church. She is our mother: we are her children. Just as children must listen to their

mother and obey her, so we, God's children, must listen to the voice of our mother, the Catholic Church, and obey her. The Church tells us whatever God has revealed or made known to us through Jesus Christ and the Apostles. Consequently we are obliged to believe whatever God has revealed to us and the Catholic Church teaches us in God's name. Remember, however, dear children, that what the Catholic Church teaches us today is not anything new. It is the very same truth, which God has made known to us through Jesus Christ and the Apostles.

Therefore what I teach you in the Catechism class is the very same teaching that God revealed to us and the Catholic Church teaches. You believe that. When the priest preaches to the people in the church, he does not preach his own doctrines, but he announces the same Gospel which God Himself has revealed to us and which the Church teaches in His name. The people believe the priest, because he speaks God's word. All the truths that God told us and the Church teaches are gathered together in your Catechism. You see, therefore, that the Catholic Church is the Divine Teacher of God's word—the Guide to Heaven. *(Repeat the answer of the Catechism as above).*

2. After the Feast of Pentecost the Apostles went as missionaries into foreign lands to preach the Gospel as Jesus had commanded them. Their successors, the Popes and Bishops, continued to preach the same doctrines and will continue to teach them to the end of time. Now, in order to make it easy for the people to learn and remember the chief teachings of the Apostles, and in order that the Christians might be able to be preserved from the false teachings of false teachers, the pastors and rulers of Gods' Church gathered together into a short summary the chief doctrines of the Apostles. This brief outline of our Faith is called the Apostles' Creed. It is called "Creed" from the Latin word "Credo"—"I believe". Our Catechism says: **We shall find the chief truths which the Catholic**

Church teaches in the Apostles' Creed. *(Repeat togteher; use the blackboard).*

The Apostles' Creed contains the chief truths of our holy Faith in brief outline. I say "in brief outline." For not every doctrine of our religion is stated in clear and express words in the Creed; but the chief truths of our Faith are there nevertheless. They are contained in the Creed just as a seed contains the tree with all its branches or just as the body of an infant contains the limbs of a full grown man. Do we have to believe that the Apostles wrote the Creed just as we have it today? No, for only the outlines of the Creed have come down to us from the Apostles. When false teachers arose and spread errors against our holy Faith, the pastors and rulers of the Church would add new words or sentences to the Creed, in order to put Christians on their guard against these false doctrines of heretics. Thus for instance, when certain false teachers taught that an evil spirit made the world, the Church put the Faithful on their guard by adding these words to the Creed "Creator of heaven and earth". The Apostles' Creed, therefore, contains no new teachings, but is simply a brief summary or outline of the chief truths as taught by the Apostles.

The Catholic Church has always held the Creed in the highest reverence and honor. It was the mark or sign by which a person was recognized as a Christian. It is, therefore, sometimes called by the name "Symbol of the Apostles", for the word "Symbol" means mark or sign. No one was admitted to be present at Holy Mass in the early Church, unless he could recite the Creed by heart. Neither were the Christians permitted to tell the Creed to persons who were not yet baptized. A person about to be baptized was obliged to recite the Creed as a sign that he was fit to be received into the Church. Even at the present day either the person to be baptized or the sponsor of that person is obliged to recite the Creed. Why then did the Church take such great care of the Apostles' Creed? Because in

the Creed are contained the chief doctrines, which Christ Himself handed over to the safekeeping of the Apostles.

The Apostles' Creed may be divided into three great parts. The first part speaks of God, the Father, and of the creation; the second part tells us about God, the Son, Jesus Christ, and our redemption; the third part teaches us about God, the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification. The Creed may also be divided into twelve smaller parts, which are called "articles". How many parts has your thumb?—your index finger? The two parts of your thumb and the three parts of your index finger go to make up your thumb and your index finger respectively. In the same way the Apostles' Creed is made up of twelve parts or articles. Now just as you cannot take away any one of the links of a chain without destroying or breaking the chain, so neither can you take away any one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed without destroying our holy Faith. The number of the articles of the Apostles' Creed is the same as the number of the Apostles. This number twelve reminds us that these articles contain the doctrines taught by the Apostles.

(Besides the Apostles' Creed, which is recited at Baptism, there are three other Creeds. They all, of course, teach the very same doctrines that the Apostles taught. When, however, certain truths of our holy Faith were especially attacked by heretics, the pastors and rulers of Holy Church would defend these truths by expressing them clearly in a special Creed. Thus we have the three following Creeds:

a) *The Nicene Creed,* which was composed at the Council of Nice, A. D. 325. It was enlarged at the Council of Constantinople A. D. 381. This Creed was drawn up especially against the heretic Arius, who denied that Christ was God, and also against other heretics (the Macedonians) who denied that the Holy Ghost was God. It is recited on certain days by the priest (or

sung by the choir in a High Mass)after the Gospel at Holy Mass.

b) *The Athanasian Creed,* which was written probably during the fourth century. In this Creed the teachings concerning the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation are especially developed.

c) *The Creed of Pope Pius IV,* which was written in the year 1564, is drawn up especially against the Protestants. Some additions were made to this Creed by the Vatican Council in the year 1870. This Creed is recited by a convert on the occasion of his reception into the Catholic Church).

Write on the blackboard:

1. The Catholic Church—the Teacher of God's word.
2. Chief truths of our Faith—the Apostles' Creed.

Synthesis. Let us now review briefly what we have learned today. You must commit to memory very carefully this great truth: The Catholic Church is the Teacher and Guide for man in regard to God's word or Divine Revelation. Now tell me: Through whom did God make His Revelation known to man in the Old Testament? In the New Testament? Into whose keeping did Christ commit His teachings? Who are the successors of the Apostles? Who, then, is the Teacher of Divine Revelation for all men? Where do we find the chief truths of our holy Faith? What does the word "Creed" mean? What does the word "Symbol" mean? Why is the Apostles' Creed sometimes called the "Symbol" of the Apostles? How can you show that the Church always held the Apostles' Creed in great reverence? (Tell me the names of some other Creeds? Are these Creeds different from the Apostles' teachings? Why did the Church draw up these Creeds?) *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism and assign the lesson for next class).*

Application. 1. The Catholic Church teaches us in God's name the things we must believe to be saved.

The following story is related of a certain martyr named Romanus, who was cruelly tortured for his Faith in Jesus Christ by a pagan prefect or judge. The martyr spoke these words to his persecutor: "If you do not wish to believe my words; if you refuse to believe the truth, that I am professing before you, ask that little infant, who surely cannot be suspected of a lie, and from its mouth you will hear the truth." At these words Romanus pointed to a little child among the crowd of Christians standing nearby. A Christian mother held the child in her arms. Immediately the little baby cried out with a loud voice: "Christ is true God". The judge, astonished at this miracle and white with rage, asked the child: "And who told you this?" The little one answered: "My mother told me and God told my mother." Dear children, if anyone of you is asked how you know the truths of our holy Faith, you cannot reply more wisely than this little child. Who has taught you that Christ is God; that He arose from the dead; that He will come to judge the living and the dead? "My mother, the Catholic Church, has told me, and God has told my mother"—that must be your answer. Christ has revealed the truths of our Faith to the Apostles; the Apostles told them to the Catholic Church; the Catholic Church tells them to you.

2. The chief truths of our Faith are contained in the Apostles' Creed. The faithful members of God's Church have always showed great love and veneration for this sacred profession of our Faith. St. Peter of Verona, a religious of the Dominican Order, was very zealous in learning, professing and preaching the Apostles' Creed. Certain heretics (the Manicheans), whom Peter tried to convert to the true Faith, after heaping all sorts of calumnies and persecutions upon him. swore to kill him. One day while Peter was returning from the city of Como to Milan, Italy, he met one of these heretics, named Carino, who with other heretics had plotted to kill him. The assassin struck Peter with an axe on the head with such force that the

holy man fell to the ground half dead. Rising to his knees he recited the first article of the Apostles' Creed and offering up his blood as a sacrifice to God, he dipped his fingers in the blood flowing from his wound and wrote on the ground the words: "Credo in Deum"—"I believe in God." The murderer then pierced his heart and the saint gave up his soul of God on the 6th of April, 1252. What reverence this holy man had for this sacred mark or symbol of our Faith! Let us ask this saint to assist us to recite the Creed daily to obtain courage to practise the sacred truths contained therein. "St. Peter, martyr of the Creed, pray for us"!

3. Now arise and with folded hands recite after me the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God, the Father," etc.

LESSON IV.

(I). God and His Perfections.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is God? L. II, Q. 13.
2) Had God a beginning? L. II, Q. 14.
3) Where is God? L. II, Q. 15.
4) If God is everywhere, why do we not see Him? L. II, Q. 16.

Preparation. Dear children, God has given us a Divine Teacher and Guide to show us the way to Heaven. This Teacher and Guide is the Catholic Church. She has gathered the chief truths of our holy Faith together in the Apostles' Creed . (*Let us review the preceding lesson briefly.*)—This short formula of our Faith is divided into twelve small articles. In the first of these articles we say: "I believe in God." We must try to understand what this means. Many years ago there ruled in Syracuse, a city on the island of Sicily, a pagan king named Hiero. He once asked a very wise man, called Simonides, the following ques-

tion: "What is God"?—This learned man begged the king to allow him one day to consider this matter carefully before he gave his answer. On the next day he went to the king and asked for two more days. At the end of these two days he asked for more time. He did this same thing for several days. Finally the king became impatient at the delay and asked Simonides why he postponed his answer so long. The wise man replied: "The longer I consider the question, "what is God"? the less I seem to know about it." Dear children, I must speak to you about God and tell you what He is. But the same thing happens to me, that happened to that learned pagan. For no man, not even the angels and the saints of Heaven, can tell perfectly what God is; no one can say that he understands God perfectly and clearly. Indeed God would cease to be God, if He could be understood by angels or by men. However, it is not necessary that we understand God perfectly. We know enough, if we know what God has told us about Himself.

Aim. Today I intend to tell you what God is and how perfect He is, because the better we know God the more will we love and serve Him.

Presentation. The Bible History tells us that while Moses was tending the sheep of his father-in-law, Jethro, a priest of Madian in Arabia, one day he led his flock into the desert to the mountain of Horeb. Suddenly he noticed a flame of fire burst forth from the midst of a bush. Moses was astonished, because he noticed that the flame did not consume the bush. He approached to see what it might be. A voice called out from the burning bush: "Moses, Moses! come not nearer. Put off the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses hid his face, for he dared not look up. But the Lord spoke again: "I have seen the misery of My people in Egypt and I have heard their cry. I am come to save them out of the hands of the Egyptians and to bring

them into a good and spacious land, into a land that floweth with milk and honey. But come, I will send thee to Pharo, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." Moses replied: "The children of Israel will ask of me: Who hath sent thee? What is his name"? The Lord answered: "I am who am. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: "He who is, the Lord, the God of your fathers, hath sent me to you." *(Present a large picture of this scene to the children.)*

Explanation. 1. a) This surely was a wonderful scene that happened in the desert to Moses, the great leader of the Israelites. Quietly and not suspecting anything he led his sheep forward. Far and wide not a single person could be seen; only here and there he came upon some wild animal, that frightened at his approach hastened away. All of a sudden he noticed the flame of fire in the midst of the bush. Surprised he stood still and from a distance watched the strange sight. "I wonder what that is"? he asked himself. Going nearer he heard a mysterious voice call out to him: "Moses, Moses! come not nigh hither. I am the God of thy fathers."—Strange indeed, Moses heard the voice, but did not see God who spoke. Who can explain this riddle?—No one can see God, because **God is a spirit.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see diagram below, just above the synthesis.)* Yes, God is a spirit, for Jesus Himself told us so. Speaking to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, the Lord said to her: "God is a spirit, and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and truth" (John iv, 24).

b) Are there any other spirits besides God?—The angels are spirits; so too are our souls. But there is a mighty difference between God and every other spirit. Let us try to understand this difference. This world is beautiful indeed. Just think of the glory of the starry firmament on a summer's night; recall the loveliness of the flowers in the spring time; think of the leaves rich in various colors in the autumn. More beau-

tiful than this is the soul of man in the state of sanctifying grace; far more lovely are the souls of the saints and angels in Heaven; incomparably more beautiful is the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God. But what is all this beauty when compared with the beauty of God Himself? The Lord Almighty is millions and millions of times more lovely. Dear children, nothing is absolutely perfect on earth and in the Heavens. Everything lacks some good or other. God alone is perfect, because nothing is wanting to Him. He is so good, that He could not be better, that is, He is infinitely good. The perfections of God are like an ocean. How large the ocean is! We can travel for days in the fastest steamer without seeing land; the ocean is in many places so deep, that it cannot be sounded even with lines that are miles long. The ocean is made up of single drops of water. Who can count them all?—It would take thousands and thousands of years to do so! But even if we were to spend millions and millions of years in counting the perfections of God, we could never succeed. God has so many and such great perfections, that if we wished to measure how great they are, or to count how many they are, we would never finish. We can say all this in one sentence: **God is infinitely perfect.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* O my dear children! how we ought to reverence the great God!

2. a) Now I am going to see who can think. God said to Moses: "I will send thee to Pharao to lead My people out of Egypt." Moses became frightened, when he heard these words of the Lord. "Who am I"? he asked. "The children of Israel will ask me: Who hath sent thee"? The Lord answered: "He who is, the Lord, the God of thy fathers, hath sent thee—thus shalt thou speak." These are strange words: "I am who am." Who can understand them?—God means to say: "I am he, who always is—the eternal God. In the name of the eternal God thou shouldst go to the children of Israel and they will believe and obey." No

man can say of himself: "I am, who am," because no man has always been in this world. How old are you N. N? Eleven years. Well then twelve years ago you could not say of yourself: "I am," because then you were not even born. Every man and every thing in this world had a beginning, except God alone. Therefore only God can say of Himself: "I am, who am," because there never was a time, when God did not exist. Indeed God was even before time itself. **God had no beginning, that is, He always was.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* The Holy Bible says of God: "Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world were formed, from eternity to eternity, Thou art God" (Ps. 89, 2), and again: "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. iii, 8).

b) Dear children, one hundred years from now not one of you will be able to say of himself: "I am," because not one of you will be here. You all will have left this mortal life. The time will come when the sun will be darkened, the moon will no longer give her light, the stars will fall from the heavens, the earth will be changed. But God will never change. He will never cease to be. **God always will be.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* In God there is no past, no future. To Him everything is present. He alone can say of Himself: "I am, who am." **God is eternal.** *(Repeat the entire answer together as stated in the Catechism.)*

3. Dear children, when I think of that wonderful sight in the desert, something else comes into my mind. Moses was in the lonely desert. Solemn silence reigned about him. He thought most probably that he was all alone. And yet God was there, for Moses heard the voice of the Lord distinctly. God is with the angels of Heaven; God is in the desert; God is on the sea; God is in all the stars. **God is everywhere.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* Listen to these beautiful words of Holy Scripture: "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I

ascend into Heaven Thou are there: if I descend into Hell, Thou art present. If I take wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. And I said: perhaps darkness shall cover me: and the night shall be my light in my pleasures. But darkness shall not be dark to Thee, and night shall be light as the day: the darkness thereof, and the light thereof, are alike to Thee" (Ps. 137, 7). Yes, dear children, God is greater than the heavens and the earth. King Solomon once said beautifully: "Lord God of Israel, Thou art the one true God. I have built a house for Thy dwelling, to be Thy most firm throne forever. And yet, if Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house, which I have built"? (III Kings viii, 27).

4. I have already told you that Moses thought that he was all alone in the desert. But he was mistaken, for God was there. Moses heard the voice of God, but he did not see Him with his eyes. God cannot be seen by men. There is a veil between God and us. We cannot see the stars by day; but only when the night comes. So, too, we cannot see God during the day of our mortal life on earth. We shall see Him only when the darkness of death comes over us. In this life God is a hidden God, as the Prophet Isaias says (lxv, 5). This great and beautiful world is the work of His hands. But we cannot see with the eyes of the body God Himself, from Whom everything comes and Who is everywhere. We cannot perceive Him with the senses of our body, for God is a spirit and has no bodily shape or form. Our Catechism says: **We do not see God, because He is a pure spirit and cannot be seen with bodily eyes.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Because God is a spirit the Jews were strictly forbidden to make an image or picture of Him (Ex. xx, 4). Neither can we make a picture or image of God. And yet, you all, I think, have a picture of God in your homes. What is it?—It is the picture of Jesus Christ,

the Son of God, who became a man and died for us on the cross. We can see Him, because He has a body like ours. God, the Holy Ghost, is represented as a dove or a tongue of fire, because He appeared in these forms on certain occasions. God, the Father, is represented as a venerable old man holding the world in the palm of His hand. This picture tells us how old God is—that He is eternal. But all these external forms, under which God appeared to men, are not God Himself. In like manner we read of the eyes, the ears, the hands, the feet of God. But all this is only to impress upon us that God sees us, and hears us, is Almighty, etc. God is a spirit and cannot be seen with bodily eyes.

Write on the blackboard:

God is { spirit infinitely perfect;
had no beginning (eternal);
everywhere (omnipresent);
cannot be seen with bodily eyes.

Synthesis. Now let us review briefly what we have just learned about God. What did Moses hear in the desert? Did he see anyone? Who spoke out of the midst of the burning bush? What is God? How perfect is God? Are there any other beings as perfect as God? Name some other spirits. By what name did God call Himself? What did God mean when He called Himself: "I am, who am"? Can anyone else besides God say those words of himself? Why not? Did God have a beginning? Where is God? Why could not Moses see God? Can we make a picture of God as He really is? Why not? Under what forms did God appear to men? What do you mean, when you say that God has eyes, or ears? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. God is a spirit.—He gave us a spirit, an immortal soul. To be sure, our soul is only a tiny little spirit as compared with God, the greatest spirit.

Our soul in comparison with God is like a drop of water compared to the great ocean; a little spark as compared with the mighty sun. And yet, there are people, who imagine that they can understand perfectly the great God with their little minds. O! what foolish people! No, we can only believe and adore the great God. We can only say: "Holy God! we praise Thy name."

2. God is eternal.—What is eternity? Place yourselves in spirit on the shore of the boundless ocean and look out across the water. Tell me, can you see the other side?—No, that is impossible, even though you were to look across the face of the ocean for a thousand years. Indeed, even though you were to think of the eternity of God for countless years, you can never understand it. God is good, and because He is good, He wants to give us something of His eternal life. In the Apostles' Creed we say: "I believe in life everlasting." O! what a great consolation are not these words of God, when things go wrong with us. When all is well with us, we seem like persons who are having a pleasant dream; but when things go wrong, we seem like people, who have a bad dream. Dear children, we shall all die and awaken in eternity. How shall we awaken?—Just as we have lived. Now I understand why St. Aloysius continually repeated to himself those words: "What will that profit me in eternity"? Now I understand why St. Theresa exclaimed so often: "O eternity! how unspeakably happy thou makest the good, how terribly unhappy thou makest the wicked." Dear children, you all must choose the one or the other: either an eternity of happiness with God, or an eternity of sorrow with the damned in Hell. Which do you choose?

3. God is everywhere.—Once a brother and sister, James and Anna, were at home all alone. The little boy said to his sister: "Come, let us find something good to eat." Anna answered: "If you can lead me to a place, where no one will see us, I will go with you." "Well then, let us go into the dining-room; there, you know, there are many good things to eat," James said

to his sister. "O no"! replied Anna, "for our neighbor, who is splitting wood in the yard, can see us." "Well then," said James, "come with me into the kitchen. There in the pantry mother has left a jar of honey." "What are you thinking about," said Anna, "do you not know that the lady next door, who is sewing at the window, can look right in at us"? Well then," continued James, "let us go into the cellar, for there there are many fine apples and pears. It is pitch dark there, and I am sure that no one can see us." Anna replied: "O my dear brother! do you really think that no one can see us there? Do you not know that there is an eye above us, that can look through the thickest wall and see even in the darkness"?—James became frightened and said: "Yes, you are right; God is there also, where no man's eye can see. Therefore we will not do anything wrong anywhere." Anna was glad that her little brother took her words to heart and offered him a little picture. On it was the eye of God surrounded by rays of light. Below it was written the inscription:

"Look up to Heaven! God is there.
Peer down into the deep! God is there.
Look round about you! God is near you.
From Him you can never flee!
For wherever you go, God is with you."

Dear children never forget this truth, and you will be kept safe every day of your lives.

LESSON V.

(II). God and His Perfections.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Does God see us? L. II, Q. 17.
2) Does God know all things? L. II, Q. 18.
3) Can God do all things? L. II, Q. 19.
4) Is God all just, holy, and merciful? L. II, Q. 20.

Preparation. Dear children, in the last lesson we

learned what God is and some of His glorious perfections. Let me see whether you remember what I told you. *(Review the preceding lesson briefly by appropriate questions.)*—In the Book of Kings of the Old Testament we read the story of the Queen of Sheba, who had heard of the glorious things that King Solomon had done for God's Holy Name. She determined to pay a personal visit to Jerusalem, in order to ask the King certain questions, and thereby learn whether all these things were really so. Solomon answered all her questions with the utmost clearness and wisdom. She was simply astounded at the wisdom of his answers. He showed her his magnificent palace, the richness of his table, the great number of his servants, the many offerings that were made each day to Almighty God in the magnificent Temple. The queen was so surprised that she could scarcely speak. Dear children, with what holy wonder and awe must we not be filled, when we consider, not an earthly king only, but God Himself, the King of Heaven and earth; when we think of His greatness and glory, His wisdom and might, His wonderful perfections!

Aim. Today I am going to speak to you of God's perfections: of His wisdom and might, of His justice, holiness and mercy.

Presentation. The Bible History tells us the remarkable story of the life and deeds of Moses, the great Prophet and Leader of the chosen people of God. Pharao of Egypt persecuted the Israelites most cruelly, because they adored the one true God. Yes, he even ordered that every newly born baby boy of the Israelites be cast into the Nile River. You recall how Moses was saved in a miraculous manner from a watery grave. How did that happen? *(Have one of the children narrate the story briefly; show a large picture of this scene).* Moses grew up and was taken into the palace of Pharao, where he was educated just like one of the king's own children. When he became a full grown man, the Lord spoke to him, saying: "Go to

Pharao and lead My people out of Egypt". Moses went to the king and delivered the Lord's message, saying: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: let My people depart from Egypt." The king replied: "Who is the Lord, that I should hear His voice and let Israel go?" Thereupon Moses showed that God, the Lord, had indeed sent him. For he threw down upon the ground the staff, which the Lord had given to him, and it was turned into a serpent, that crawled at his feet. But the king refused to obey God's command. He persecuted the chosen people even more than before. Then the Lord sent the ten plagues upon Egypt, one more terrible than the other. At last Pharao gave in and said to Moses: "Arise and go forth from among my people, you and the children of Israel".

Soon after, however, the king felt sorry, because he had allowed the Israelites to depart; so he pursued them with his army and he came upon them on the shores of the Red Sea. But here Pharao and his warriors were destroyed; the sea buried them all in its waters. *(Present a large picture of this scene).*

The Israelites came to Mount Sinai in the desert. Here Almighty God gave them the Ten Commandments written on two tables of stone. But while Moses was on the mountain speaking with God, the Israelites were committing grievous sin by adoring the golden calf. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw the evil that the people were doing, he became very angry. However, the Israelites repented and begged Moses to pray to God for them. The Lord then pardoned them.

Finally while in the desert the Lord God gave the Israelites manna from Heaven, quails, and water from the rock. He watched over them just as a father guards his dear children from every harm. He led them safely through the desert into the Promised Land.

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, even as a child I loved to hear and read about the story of Moses and

the people of Israel; I rejoiced when the little child Moses escaped from drowning in the river; I was glad when the Lord protected the Israelites from harm. Pharao had persecuted the chosen people of the Lord most shamefully; he treated them as slaves. But God from His throne in Heaven was watching all this. The king of Egypt had ordered all the male children of the Israelites to be cast into the Nile River. God saw this. He noticed how Moses' mother laid him in a basket made of bulrushes and placed him near the bank of the river. God saw everything. **God sees us** too. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see diagram below just above the synthesis).*

b) God wanted to save Moses. The king's daughter came to the river to bathe. She saw the basket floating on the water and ordered one of her maids to bring the basket to her. Do you think that all this happened by chance? No, indeed, for God saw and knew all. He arranged to have the king's daughter come at that time. God watched over Moses. He saw to it, too, that Moses was adopted into the family of Pharao and that he became educated in all the learning and arts of the Egyptians. He wanted to prepare Moses to be the great leader of His chosen people. God watched over Moses. **God watches over us** too. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. The Israelites had suffered bitter persecutions for many, many years at the hands of the Egyptians. God knew all that was taking place. Therefore He sent Moses to Pharao to ask permission for the Israelites to leave that country. The Lord knew that Pharao would pursue the chosen people of God with his army after he had granted permission to them to depart. It was not necessary for anyone to tell Him anything. God knew Pharao's most secret thoughts, words and actions. **God knows all our most secret thoughts, words and actions** too. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. Moses feared to go to Pharao. However, he trusted in the Lord's assistance. Therefore he went

boldly to Pharao and demanded that he allow the Israelites to depart out of Egypt. Pharao laughed at this request and said: "Who is the Lord, that He can command me?" Moses then threw down on the ground the staff, which the Lord had given to him. Into what did the staff turn? Pharao still refused. Then the Lord sent the ten plagues upon the king and the Egyptians. 1. All the waters of the Nile River were changed into blood. 2. The river brought forth an abundance of frogs, which covered the entire land of Egypt. 3. Swarms of sciniphs (small flying insects), thick as dust, filled the air. 4. Swarms of flies came into the houses of the king and his servants. 5. A grievous murrain or disease struck the cattle and destroyed them. 6. Boils and swellings came upon men and cattle. 7. Hail and thunder and lightning fell upon the country and detroyed all things that grew in the fields. 8. Swarms of locusts settled on all that the hail had left. 9. Thick darkness covered the land of Egypt for three days.—The land of Gessen, where the children of Israel dwelt, felt none of these calamities. Finally, during the night the Angel of the Lord struck with death the first-born of Egypt. The king, however, still refused to obey the Lord. Finally however, Pharao consented and allowed the Israelites to depart. Soon after Pharao changed his mind again and pursued the people of God with his army. But he and his entire army were destroyed in the waters of the Red Sea. Do you see how God showed that even the most powerful king is like a helpless baby in the sight of the Lord God? Everything and everybody must obey the Lord: man, animals, the weather, the sea. God has only to wish and it is done. **God can do all things and nothing is hard or impossible to Him.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. a) The last of the ten plagues sent upon Egypt was the greatest and hardest of all to bear. What was it? Yes, the eldest born son of every Egyptian family was slain by the hand of the avenging Angel of the

Lord. Then Pharao in anger said to Moses: "Arise and go forth from among my people, you and the children of Israel. If you come again, you will have to die." Moses answered: "So be it. I will appear no more before you. But know that at midnight God will pass through Egypt and every first born will die." Weeping and lamentations were heard throughout all the land. But Pharao deserved to be punished. It was a just punishment for his wickedness. God punishes the wicked—God is just. But not a single one of the Israelites died. God rewards the good—God is just. Pharao still hardened his heart in spite of the evils which befell him, and his people resisted God's holy will up to the last minute. God became very angry with Pharao and punished him by destroying him in the Red Sea. God punishes the wicked—God is just. Moses served God faithfully. He is now with God in Heaven. God rewards the good—God is just. What does our Catechism say of God?—**God is just.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Moses and Pharao are dead over three thousand years. Moses' name is mentioned with reverence and honor by all the world. Pharao's name is spoken with aversion and hatred by men. Which of these two men do you like?—Moses or Pharao? You prefer Moses, of course. That is right. You think just as God thinks. Moses was good and holy. He feared to offend God by sin; therefore God loved him as a father loves his children. God hated Pharao, because he was wicked. He did not like to see this wicked king maltreat the Israelites. God hated the wicked conduct of Pharao. God loves the good and hates the wicked. **God is holy.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Dear children, in spite of the blessings, which the Lord had showered upon the Israelites, the chosen people of God soon forgot His many kindnesses. At Mt. Sinai they made a golden calf and adored it as their god. What a terrible sin! They offended the good Lord grievously. Moses coming down from the moun-

tain scolded the Israelites severely for their wicked conduct. He then prayed for them and begged the Lord to forgive their sins. He told them to do penance and to repent. They did so. Then God forgave them all. God pardons all sinners, who truly repent for their sins. God is merciful. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

God { *sees and watches over us* (Divine Providence).
knows all things (omniscient).
can do all things (omnipotent).
is all *just, holy, merciful.*

Synthesis. What we have learned today ought to fill us not only with wonder, but also with fear and joy. Tell me, did God see what happened to the little baby Moses? Does God also see us and watch over us? Did God know what Pharao was thinking of in his heart? Does God know even our most secret thoughts, words and actions? How can you show from the life of Pharao, that God is all powerful? Can God do all things? Does God punish the wicked and reward the good? Is God all just? Does God hate the wicked and love the good? Is God all holy? Did God forgive the Israelites after they fell into sin? Is the Lord God all merciful? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. God sees us and watches over us. Our Bible History narrates a story that shows us even more clearly that God sees us and watches over us. It is the story of Joseph of Egypt. Do you know that story? Like Moses Joseph was exposed to death. But one of his brothers took pity on him. Joseph was then sold as a slave and was cast into prison in Egypt. But finally he was freed and became the most powerful man in all Egypt, next to Pharao himself. Thus Joseph became the helper of the Israelites in their need. Who could have thought it possible? God saw

all that was happening to Joseph and watched over him all those years. He arranged all for the best. Dear children, when things go wrong with you, do not complain and speak against the Lord God. Just trust in Him as good children trust in their father. God will arrange all for the best.

2. God knows all things. Jesus showed that He knows all things. Give me an example. Yes, Peter, Judas, Jerusalem. You know that Christ told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well all the sins of her whole life. Once the Pharisees were with Jesus and were thinking evil in their hearts against Him. But Jesus said to them: "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" You can well imagine how frightened they were. So it is whenever you think something secretly in your minds. At that very moment your thoughts are, as it were, photographed in God's mind. He will never forget them. He will reveal or make known all on the last day. That thought ought to keep you from committing sin even in secret.

3. God can do all things. When did God show in a special manner that He can do all things? In the beginning God said: "Let it be" and all things were created out of nothing. Look up to the heavens! There in the stars is written in shining letters: "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (Ps. 18, 1). Give me another example of God's power. Jesus showed us His might in the many miracles He performed. Because God is mighty, always have childlike confidence and trust in His help. Where no man can help, there God surely can. If your father or mother is sick and in danger of death, what ought you to do? Yes, have recourse to prayer. Nothing is hard or impossible to God. When the Israelites saw Pharao's army coming after them, they surely must have thought to themselves: Now all is lost. And yet, they were saved by the mighty hand of God.

4. a) God is all just. Did you ever see a picture of

the Last Judgment? On the right hand of the Judge are the just: on the left hand of Jesus are the wicked. Among the good are many poor men; among the wicked are many great and mighty men: emperors, kings, children, too. What does this picture tell us? It cries out to us: "God is just." But if God is just, why do the wicked often prosper in this life? Remember that even though God postpones His punishments, He does not forget them. God can wait long, for He is eternal. If the wicked get along well here on earth for a time, God is only storing up their punishments for the other life. No one can escape from the hands of the just Lord. The great day of reckoning is the day, when all will receive according to their works. It will take place at the end of the world. Just think of the rich man, Dives, and the poor man, Lazarus. Therefore I would rather be poor and good, than rich and wicked. God is all just.

b) God is all holy. God Himself told us that when He gave the Ten Commandments. They tell us: "Do what is holy; avoid what is wicked and sinful." God speaks to us through our conscience; that is God's voice in our hearts. St. Paul tells us (I Thess. iv, 3): "That is the will of God, your sanctification." You see, therefore, that God wants you to be holy, to be saints. We all are the image and likeness of God! Of course, some of you may perhaps be thinking to yourselves: "What! I am a saint?"—Why not? St. Augustine said: "Others have become saints, why cannot I become a saint?" He succeeded; for once he was a great sinner, but by the grace of God, he became one of the greatest of God's saints. All that you must do, is to will to become saints and then use the means of grace faithfully, namely prayer and the Sacraments.

c) God is all merciful. That is a great consolation for the poor sinner. Jesus told us a beautiful parable to teach us this truth. It is the parable of the prodigal son. There we see how merciful and forgiving God is. How often did not Jesus forgive you your sins! The

Sacrament of Penance is the Sacrament of the mercy of God.

Dear children, let us now sing (or recite) the beautiful hymn called the "Te Deum" in honor of God's infinite perfections. "Holy God we praise Thy name," etc.

LESSON VI.

The Existence and the Unity of God.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Is there but one God? L. III, Q. 21.
2) Why can there be but one God? L. III, Q. 22.

Preparation. Dear children, in the last two lessons we have learned what God is and how perfect He is. Let us review the foregoing lesson briefly. *(Question the pupils on the preceding lesson).* God is a spirit. We cannot see Him with the eyes of our body. It is as though there were a curtain hanging between God and ourselves. And yet, there is a God. How do you know that? Just listen attentively to me. I am now speaking to you about God. When I speak, I think. Do you see me think? No, you do not; but you know that I am thinking, because you hear me speaking. So it is in regard to God. We do not see God, but we know there is a God by the works He has performed. Once some one asked the following question of an Arab in the desert: "How do you know that there is a God?" He answered: "In the same way in which I know by the footprints in the sand, that a man or an animal has passed this way." So we too, seeing the traces of wisdom and power in this world, cannot fail to exclaim: "So many wonders must indeed be the work of God!"

Aim. Today I intend to show you that there is a God and there can be but one God. We shall first look at the world in which we live; then into our own hearts and finally into God's word or revelation. However,

first tell me: What shape has the earth? It is shaped like an orange. We represent the earth by a globe. *(Show one to the children).* The sun, too, is a globe; so are the moon and the stars. What is an astronomer? *(Write the word on the blackboard).* An astronomer is a person who studies about the sun, the moon and the stars. Now you will be able to understand what I am going to tell you in the following story.

Presentation. About three hundred years ago there was a certain famous astronomer, whose name was Athanasius Kircher. He was a very pious man and a member of the Jesuit order. He had a dear friend, who was unwilling to believe in God; who doubted whether there really was a God. The astronomer wished to show his doubting friend that God exists. So he had a beautiful globe made, which he placed in his study. Soon afterwards his friend came to visit him. Noticing the globe he asked: "Athanasius, where did you get that globe? That is a work of art." The learned astronomer answered, dryly: "That globe? Why, it made itself since you were here the last time." His friend laughed. "You are joking," he said. But the astronomer said very earnestly: "My friend! It would be easier for a little globe like that to make itself than the great globe on which we live." This simple argument convinced the doubting friend, and he again believed in God.

Explanation. 1. Dear children, the little globe representing the earth was indeed a little work of art. You could not make one like it, neither could I. But what is that little globe when compared with the mighty globe on which we live? It is a tiny little thing. Or what is it as compared with the giant globe of the sun in the heavens? It is like a drop of water as compared with the mighty, mighty ocean. Up there in the heavens there are thousands of great globes. Who would be so foolish as to think, that they all made themselves? No, I would sooner believe what the astronomer said to his friend half in earnest and half in fun: "The globe made

itself." It would be easier to believe that than to believe that the globes in the heavens made themselves. But if they did not make themselves, what must we say? There must be some one who made them; and this some one is God. Yes, the starry heavens say to us: "There is a God." Therefore King David in one of the Psalms of the Holy Bible says: "The heavens show forth the glory of God and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (Ps. 18, 1). What does David mean to say? "My child," he says, "look at the heavens and consider, that God has made all so beautifully and so wondrously." Yes, **there is a God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see diagram below just above the synthesis)*

a) Now let me show you this even more clearly. If you go into a room where there is a candle burning, but do not see anyone, what do you know at once? You know that some one must have lighted that candle, otherwise it would not be burning. On the heavens above the light of the sun shines forth and illumines the entire earth. Surely some one must have kindled that light! The burning candle in the room will soon go out again if some one does not keep it burning. But the sun in the heavens has been burning and shining for thousands of years and continues to burn and shine. There must be some one, who takes care of it and keeps it burning and shining continually. Dear children, if you look up into the heavens on a beautiful and bright night, you can see countless lights burning there. It seems as though the whole starry firmament were a great Christmas tree, on which innumerable lights are burning. They could not shine, unless some one had given them light and brightness. The great astronomer, Newton, used to uncover and bow his head whenever the name of God was mentioned. Yes, on the stars is written: "There is a God."

Our earth is a globe, too. Just look around you a little. Everything is made so beautifully and arranged so wisely. Everything around us calls out to us: "A

great Mind has made us!" Every blade of grass in the fields, every bush in the woods, every little insect in the air calls out to us: "There is a God!" Job, that grand old man who left us such a noble example of patience, was right when he said: "Ask the heavens, and they will teach thee: and the birds of the air, and they will tell thee. Speak to the earth, and it will answer thee: and the fishes of the sea, shall tell thee. Who is ignorant that the hand of the Lord hath made all these things" (xii, 7-9). Yes, ask the animals. They answer: "We would not be here if God had not made us." The bird says: "I could not fly, unless God had taught me." The fish says: "I could not swim if God had not given me fins." The bee says: "I could not make the sweet honey comb unless God had taught me." Indeed, that doubting friend of the astronomer, Athanasius Kircher, had only to open his eyes wide, everywhere he could have found God. The world is really a great exposition of God. There God has shown us that He is and what He can do. **We know that there is a God from the visible world.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Our own heart is a little world. There God speaks to us. If only that doubting friend of the astronomer had looked into his own heart, he would have found God. He had only to listen and his heart would have told him: "There is a God!" Did you ever hear the voice of God within you? I know of a certain boy, in whose heart the mighty voice of God spoke so loudly, that he never afterwards had a quiet day. It called out to him like the angel's trumpet on Judgment day: "Thou wicked boy! thou murderer! The blood of thy brother calls up from earth to Heaven for vengeance!" Do you know who this boy is? It is Cain, the murderer of his brother Abel. The voice of conscience left him no peace any longer. But what is the voice of conscience? It is the voice of God in our hearts. There God speaks to us and tells us what is right and what is wrong. If you do right, it is as

though someone says: "You did right, I will reward you." Then you feel happy. But if you do wrong, if you commit sin, you hear the voice saying continually: "Woe to you! What have you done? I will punish you." Then you feel a gnawing at your heart just as though a worm were eating at your heart. Do you see, that is how God speaks in your heart. He shows us by the voice of our consciences that He really exists. **We know that there is a God by the voice of our conscience within us.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Are you not surprised that the doubting friend of the astronomer, Athanasius Kircher, could even for a single moment doubt that there is a God? He was a Christian. Why even the heathens by earnest thought can know that God exists! Of course, the heathens know that only by the visible world and by the voice of their conscience. They have only the weak light of their reason to show them this truth. But Christians know that God exists from God's own words or from Divine Revelation. A Christian sees this truth in the bright sunlight of God's word. God had already spoken to man through the holy Prophets of the Old Testament, whom He sent to announce His word to mankind. Once God revealed this truth in a very solemn manner on Mt. Sinai: "I am the Lord, thy God." He also worked miracles at various times to show that He really exists. For instance, He sent down fire from Heaven to consume the sacrifice of Elias on Mt. Carmel (III Kings, xviii) ; He saved Daniel from the lions at Babylon, and the three young men from the fiery furnace. There is a God because only God can work miracles. Finally, the Lord God sent us His own Son, Jesus Christ, from Heaven to teach us His word. Consequently it is easy for a Christian to believe in God. God's own word, Divine Revelation, tells us plainly: "There is a God." **We know that there is a God from God's own word, or Divine Revelation.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. There is a God. Even the pagans knew that, as I have just shown you. But they did not know how many gods there are. They believed that there were many gods. We Christians, however, know that there is but one God. The Lord Himself told us that in the clearest words through the mouth of His Prophet Moses: "Listen Israel! the Lord, our God, is one God" (Deut. vi, 4). There are not many gods: **there is but one God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. Every person, that has the use of reason, can know by a little serious thinking, that there can be but one God. We know that God is supreme, the most perfect Spirit. The highest mountain in the United States of America, as far as we know, is Mount Whitney in California (altitude 14,501 ft.). Now, if there were another mountain just as high as Mt. Whitney in the United States, Mount Whitney would no longer be the highest or the supreme mountain. The same is true of God. For God is supreme, that is the highest, infinite in perfections. If there were another spirit as great or greater than God, God would no longer be infinitely perfect. God cannot have an equal. Therefore our Catechism says: **There can be but one God, because God, being supreme and infinite, cannot have an equal.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Consequently anyone who thinks seriously, can know that there can be but one God. The heathens or pagans could think, and yet, most of them did not know that simple truth. Why did they adore many gods?—Because most of them committed serious sins; they were thoroughly wicked. It was night in their minds and in their hearts—the night of sin. Therefore they were so blinded, that they could not know this simple truth. The devil blinded them even more, so that they continued to live in sin and finally lost their souls. What a great misfortune is it not to be deprived of the light of Divine Faith!

Write on the blackboard:

1. *There is a God.* We know that:
   a) from the visible world;
   b) from our consciences;
   c) from God's own word (Divine Revelation).
2. There is but *one God.*
3. *God* is supreme and infinite—*cannot have an equal.*

Synthesis. We have been searching for God. Do we know that there is a God? How can we know that there is a God? What tells us in the clearest manner, that there is a God? Did God Himself tell that He really exists? How does He prove to us, that He really exists? Tell me some of the miracles that He performed? How many gods are there? Why can there be but one God? Why did not the heathens know this simple truth? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. We know that there is a God from the visible world round about us. The whole world is a great picture book of God. But most people do not look at all at these glorious pictures; or they look at them, but do not think of the great artist or painter who drew them. You ought not to be like these people. The next time you go out into the open, look at God's picture book with real understanding! You have only to open your eyes; everywhere you will find traces of God. Everything in nature says to you: "There is a God!" Then God's picture book will be for you a prayer book, too. You ought to love and praise the good God every time you see the beautiful things round about you.

2. There is a God. And yet, so many people say: "There is no God." They talk about as wisely as a man, who says: "The stars on the heavens made themselves." The Holy Bible says of such people: "Only the fool says in his heart, there is no God" (Ps. 13, 1). Such people are called atheists or infidels. If a blind

man denies that there is a sun, because he cannot see it, does that make the sun cease to be? O, no! the sun continues to shine in spite of all that the blind man says. Indeed if a man denies that God exists, that does not make God cease to be and God will one day punish such a person. Atheists, for the most part, use language, which does not at all express their true thoughts or convictions. Many of them are the first to cry to God for help, when some imminent danger threatens them. Their bold talk means very little. They are like a boy, who whistles in the dark to show that he is not afraid.

3. Dear children, people who do not believe in God, are generally men who are eaten up with pride or who live vicious lives, or both. St. Augustine says: "He who denies the existence of God has some reason for wishing that God did not exist." To believe we must be men with a pure and humble heart. Remember that. As long as you are pure and holy, you will gladly believe in God. Therefore never soil your soul with the filth of sin. It may make you lose your faith in God. In this world we believe—in the next world we shall see God face to face (I Cor. 13, 12). What a happiness will that not be for us!

Say after me this profession of faith: "O my God! I firmly believe that Thou art one God. There is no other besides Thee. There is no one equal to Thee. Keep my heart always humble and pure, so that some day I may see Thee face to face. Amen."

LESSON VII.

(I) The Most Blessed Trinity.

Catechetical Unit:

1) How many Persons are there in God? L. III, Q. 23.

2) Are the three Divine Persons equal in all things? L. III, Q. 28.

3) What do you mean by the Blessed Trinity? L. III, Q. 27.

4) Is the Father God? L. III, Q. 24.

5) Is the Son God? L. III, Q. 25.

6) Is the Holy Ghost God? L. III, Q. 26.

(N. B. Since the children are already more or less familiar with this doctrine, the catechist should strive to deepen and enlarge the knowledge which the pupils already possess by appropriate illustrations).

Preparation. Dear children, we cannot see God anywhere, and yet, we find traces of God everywhere. I am going to see how much you remember of the last lesson. *(Review the foregoing lesson briefly).* Thus far we have studied the first words of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God." We have learned that there is but one God. Our own reason tells us that there can be but one God. But we, who are Christians, know much more concerning God than what our weak reason alone can tell us. In the Apostles' Creed to the words: "I believe in God," we add the words: "the Father." Further on we add the words: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son"; finally we say the words: "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Thereby we express our faith in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We Christians believe that there is but one God; but we believe further that in this one God, there are three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. By our reason alone we could never have discovered this truth. We know it because God Himself has revealed it to us. In the Old Testament the chosen people of God, the Israelites, did not know this truth. It was veiled in a cloud, as it were. Jesus Christ dispelled the cloud, for He taught us what God alone knew. As faithful followers of Jesus Christ we believe whatever He has taught us.

Aim. Today I intend to speak to you in detail about one God in three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. Pay special attention to what I am

going to say, for the matter is somewhat difficult to understand.

Presentation. Hundreds of years before Jesus, the promised Messias, was born into this world, the Prophets of the Old Testament foretold many things concerning Him. Thus Malachias (iii, 1) prophesied that the Lord God would send a messenger before the face of the Messias, in order to prepare the way before Him. Isaias, another Prophet, foretold that the people would hear the voice of one crying in the wilderness inviting the people to get ready for the coming of the Messias. That messenger—that voice crying in the wilderness, was St. John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. This messenger of the Lord led a life of holiness and strict penance in the desert. Great crowds went out from the surrounding cities and villages into the desert to hear John's sermons and to be baptized by him in the Jordan River. One day Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Messias, who was then about thirty years of age, went from Nazareth to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But when the Baptist saw Jesus, he exclaimed: "I ought to be baptized by Thee, and dost Thou come to me?" This holy Prophet of the Lord, the Messenger from on high, in his deep humility refused to baptize Jesus. However, according to the will of God Jesus was to take away our sins by placing Himself among the ranks of sinners. St. John, therefore, obeyed and baptized Jesus. And lo! at that moment when Jesus arose from the waters, and was praying, the Heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove came down upon Jesus and rested over Him. At the same time a voice came from the far heights of Heaven, saying: "This is My dearly beloved Son, in Whom I am always well pleased." Thus did the Eternal Father and the Holy Ghost give testimony, that Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. *(Show a large picture of this scene to the pupils).*

Explanation. 1. a.) Dear children, would you not

like to have been present at that wonderful scene, that occurred on the banks of the Jordan River over nineteen hundred years ago? St. John, the Baptist, who was made holy by the special grace of God even before he was born, was there preaching about the Messias, or the Christ, and was baptizing the people to prepare them for the coming of the Redeemer. Great throngs of Scribes and Pharisees, of Priests, of soldiers, of men, women and children, came to listen to this great Prophet and to be baptized by him in the river. One day there came with many others a certain man, who did not need to listen to the sermons of St. John, for He knew all things; neither did He need to be baptized, for there was not even the faintest shadow of sin in Him. Who was the man?—It was Jesus of Nazareth, the long promised Messias. You know what happened on that occasion. St. John baptized Jesus and immediately the Heavens were thrown open. The Holy Ghost descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove and a voice sounded from Heaven, saying: "This is My dearly beloved Son, in Whom I am always well pleased." How St. John must have rejoiced as he bowed his head in deepest humility and adoration before that mysterious Voice and the Dove and the Messias!

What did that voice say?—"This is My dearly beloved Son." Whence came that voice?—It was the voice of God speaking from His throne in the Heavens. Of whom did He speak?—He spoke of Jesus and He called Him "His dearly beloved Son." Yes, that voice was the voice of God, the Father, for He called Jesus His dearly beloved Son. Therefore Jesus is the Son of God, the Father. Now tell me: what appeared over Jesus after His baptism?—It was the Holy Ghost, Who took the shape of a dove, the symbol of grace, which was now to reign in the hearts of men.

When Jesus was about to leave this world, He Himself spoke about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He said to His disciples these words: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In whose name were the disciples of Jesus to baptize all men?—Surely not in the name of any mere man, but rather in the name of God. Our Blessed Saviour mentioned three names. Are there, therefore, three gods?—No, for there can be but one God, as we have already learned. Therefore Jesus said: "Baptizing them in the *name*" (singular number), not in the names (plural number), because there is but one God. But in this one God there are three Persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. St. John teaches us the same truth in these words: "There are three, who bear testimony in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (I Ep. v, 7). How many Persons are there in God?—**In God there are three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see diagram below just above the synthesis).*

b) Now the voice that spoke from the Heavens was really distinct from the Messias, who was baptized in the Jordan, and also from the Dove that appeared over the Messias. You see, therefore, the Father, Who spoke is really distinct from the Son, Who was baptized, and also from the Holy Ghost, Who appeared as a dove over the Messias. Therefore our Catechism says: **The three Divine Persons are really distinct from one another.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Even though the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are really distinct from one another, nevertheless not any one of the three Persons is greater or more perfect than any one of the others. The Father is a Spirit infinitely perfect; the Son is a Spirit infinitely perfect; the Holy Ghost is a Spirit infinitely perfect; for they are the one self-same Spirit. The Father had no beginning; the Son had no beginning; the Holy Ghost had no beginning. Each of the three Persons always was and always will be; for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the one self-same eternal God. So it is in regard to all the other perfections of God. Each of

the three Persons knows all things, can do all things, is all just, all holy, and all merciful. Whatever the Father has, that the Son and the Holy Ghost also have in the same manner. Nothing is wanting to the Father; nothing is wanting to the Son; nothing is wanting to the Holy Ghost. Therefore our Catechism says: **The three Divine Persons are equal in all things.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard). (Have the pupils repeat the entire answer as it is in the Catechism).*

2. Dear children, how would you express this truth, that in one God there are three Divine Persons, or that the three Divine Persons are but one God?—You may say: "The Most Blessed Trinity". The word "Trinity" means the same as "threefold". There is but one God, but He is threefold in Person. **By the Most Blessed Trinity I mean that in one God there are three Divine Persons.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

We pray to God; therefore we pray also to the Most Blessed Trinity, or to each one of the three Divine Persons. There is a little prayer, that we recite in honor of the Blessed Trinity. It is called the "Doxology" *(write the word on the blackboard)* or word of praise. Let us recite it now devoutly: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." The Sign of the Cross, too, reminds us of the Blessed Trinity. Consequently whenever you bless yourselves devoutly, you make a profession of Faith in the Holy Trinity. Let us make it now together. In Holy Mass the priest recites the threefold Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy on us), Christe eleison (Christ have mercy on us), Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy on us) in honor of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Likewise the threefold Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus, Deus Sabaoth (Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of Sabaoth) in the Mass is a prayer of praise to the most adorable Trinity. Every year on the first Sunday after Pentecost, the Church asks us to

celebrate the Feast of the Most Blessed Trinity. It was on the first great Pentecost that the doctrine of the Trinity was first proclaimed to the world.

3. Christ wills that all men should believe the doctrine concerning the most Blessed Trinity, for otherwise He would not have revealed it to us. He wants us to know as much as we can about this great truth. Let us, therefore, study it a little more carefully.

a) "In God there are three Persons." What do you mean by the word *"person"?*—Can you call a tree, or a house, or a horse a person?—No; they are not persons. They are things, for they cannot think or understand; neither have they free will. But each one of you can think or understand. No one can make you act against your will, for you have free will. Each one of you has all that belongs to you to make you human beings, or men. You have a soul and a body. Each one of you forms a complete whole—a perfect individual. Consequently each one of you is a person —a human person. Are there any other beings that we can call persons?—Yes, the angels are also persons. For the angels can think or understand; they have free will. Each angel has all that belongs to an angel. Each one is a pure spirit without a body, having understanding and free will. Each angel forms a complete whole —a perfect individual. Consequently the angels are persons—angelic persons. What then do you mean by the word "person"?—**A person is a complete and perfect individual, that can think and act of himself as he wills.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Now in God there are three: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Each one of these three can think or understand; each one has free will. Each one has all that belongs to God. Nothing is wanting to any one of these three. Each and every one is a complete and perfect individual. Consequently each one of these three is a person. **The Father is a Person; the Son is a Person; the Holy Ghost is a Person.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) But what kind of persons are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?—Surely they are not human persons, for they are not men. Neither are they anglic persons, for they are not angels. They are infinitely more than men or angels. They are *"Divine"* Persons, for each one is God Almighty. Consequently the Catechism says: **In God there are three Divine Persons.**

4. The Father is really and truly God. He is not merely a picture or likeness of God. He has everything that belongs to God; He has all the perfections of God. He is almighty, eternal, all knowing, etc. Christ Himself has told us so. "I ascend to My Father, and to your Father, to My God and to your God" (John xx, 7). Yes, the Father is a Divine Person—**the Father is God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Therefore in the Apostles Creed we pray: "I believe in God, the Father."

5. The Son, too, is really and truly God. He possesses everything that belongs to God; He has all of God's perfections. The Son of God is Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Redeemer. He Himself told us so: "I and the Father are one" (John x, 30); again He said: "Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii, 58), that is, "I am from all eternity. I am the eternal God." The Jews understood this, for they condemned Jesus to death, because He made Himself God (John xix, 7), as the High Priests said. He arose from the dead by His own power to show that He really was God Almighty. Yes, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is a Divine Person—**the Son is God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

6. The Holy Ghost, too, is really and truly God just like the Father and the Son. He has everything that belongs to God; all of God's perfections belong to Him. St. Peter believed that just as we believe it. For after a certain Christian, named Ananias, and his wife, Saphira, had sold a piece of land, they kept back a part of the money, which they had received for the sale of the land. Then they went to St. Peter and gave him only a part of the money, saying that it was all that

they had received. St. Peter then said to them: "You have lied to the Holy Ghost. You have lied not to man, but to God." (Acts of Ap., v, 4). Thereupon the Holy Ghost struck them dead. Yes, the Holy Ghost is a Divine Person—**the Holy Ghost is God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

7. These three Divine Persons are equal to one another in all things, for they are one and the same God. And yet, there is a certain difference between them. There is a certain *order* among them. Let us now try to understand this as far as we can.

Just think of the sun. From it come light and heat. The sun is the first in order, because it is the head or the origin whence come or proceed light and heat. The light is the second in order, because it comes or proceeds from the sun. The heat is the third in order, for it comes or proceeds from the other two. And yet, all three exist from the very beginning. The sun is not older than the light or the heat. From the very first moment, that the sun existed, it sent forth light and heat. So too, but in an infinitely more perfect manner there is a certain order of origin among the three Divine Persons. The Father is the First Person of the Blessed Trinity, because He does not come or proceed from any other Person. From the Father comes or proceeds the Son; therefore the Son is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. From the Father and the Son comes or proceeds the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. And yet, the Father is not older than the Son or the Holy Ghost. The Father always was; the Son, too, always was; the Holy Ghost, too, always was. Each of the three Divine Persons is eternal. From all eternity, before the world was made, as long as God is God, He is the Father. Therefore He has from all eternity a Son. The Holy Ghost exists from all eternity just like the Father and the Son. Therefore our Catechism says: **The Father is the First Person of the Blessed Trinity.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* He is the Father of God, the Son. To

Him we say: "Our Father, Who art in Heaven": "I believe in God, the Father." Our Catechism says, too: **The Son is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Yes, He is the true and only Son of God, the Father. He is Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who was made man and died for our sins. Of Him we say: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord": "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." Finally our Catechism says: **The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Therefore we say in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost"; also to Him we pray, saying: "Come, O Holy Ghost! enlighten our minds and strengthen our wills." He it is, Who came down upon the Church on Pentecost and He will remain with the Church forever. He is the one, who distributes grace to us in Holy Mass, the Sacraments and Prayer.

Write on the blackboard:

1. In God—three Divine Persons—Father, Son, Holy Ghost.
2. Father, Son, Holy Ghost—distinct—equal in all things.
3. Blessed Trinity—three Persons in one God.
4. Person—a complete and perfect individual having understanding and free will.
5 Father—God—First Person.
6. Son—God—Second Person.
7. Holy Ghost—God—Third Person.

Synthesis. Let us review briefly the lesson we have just learned. What did John, the Baptist, hear when he baptized Jesus? Whose voice was it? What did the voice say? Who is Jesus? How do you know that He is the Son of God? Whom does the dove represent? How many Persons are there in God? Are these Persons distinct from one another? How do you know that? Are they equal to one another? What do you

call the truth, that in one God there are three Divine Persons? What does the word "Trinity" mean? What is a person? Name some persons. Is the Father a Person? is the Son? is the Holy Ghost? Is there any difference between the three Divine Persons? Who is the First Person? the Second? the Third? What prayers do we say in honor of the Blessed Trinity? When do we celebrate the Feast of the Blessed Trinity? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. St. Gregory, the Bishop of Tours, relates a story that bears striking testimony to the Most Blessed Trinity. He tells us there were certain heretics, called the Arians, who denied not only the true doctrine concerning the Blessed Trinity, but threatened to destroy our entire Catholic Faith. In the year 461 a party of these false teachers happened to be present at a public divine service in a Catholic Church is Gascogne, where a priest, Peter by name, was offering up the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass. Suddenly there fell from the ceiling of the church three bright drops of water of the same size upon the altar. All the people noticed this occurrence. They saw, too, how Peter caught these three drops on the little golden plate or paten. At once these three drops became one large precious stone. The priest then showed it to the people, who cried out: "A testimony to the Most Blessed Trinity—Three Divine Persons in One God!"

2. Do you know that there is an imperfect picture of the Blessed Trinity in your own souls?—Your soul is one and indivisible. And yet, your soul possesses three distinct powers. These three powers of the soul are: 1. the memory by which you recall something in the past; 2. the understanding by which you learn something new in the present; 3. the will by which you freely choose something you desire to possess, or by which you resolve to do something in the future. So too, but in an infinitely more perfect manner God is one

and indivisible. And yet, He exists in the three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

3. St. Francis Xavier is the great apostle of the Indies. When he considered how the image of the Blessed Trinity was disfigured so shamefully by sin and ignorance in the hearts of countless pagans or heathens in the Indies, he cried out day after day for ten long years: "O Most Blessed Trinity!" Neither hunger, nor cold, nor difficulty, nor danger of death could stay his zeal in repairing by instruction and Baptism the spoiled image of the Adorable Trinity in the souls of these pagans. He realized the great blessing of keeping the image of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, pure and undefiled in man's heart. Dear children, never disfigure that blessed image in your souls by sin.

LESSON VIII.

(II) The Most Blessed Trinity.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Are the three Divine Persons one and the same God? L. III, Q 29.

2) Can we fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God? L. III, Q. 30.

3) What is a mystery? L. III, Q. 31.

Preparation. Dear children, our own reasons tells us that there is but one God. But by Faith we know much more about God; for Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, that in one God there are three Divine Persons. Let us review the doctrine of the Most Blessed Trinity briefly. *(Question the children on the preceding lesson).*—A missionary once went into a foreign country to preach the Gospel to the heathen inhabitants. The country was situated in the tropics, where there is perpetual summer; where winter is unknown. This zealous priest told the natives, that in the country

whence he came at a certain time of the year, called the winter, the water becomes so hard that an elephant can walk upon it. The natives, who knew water only as always warm and even as boiling in certain springs, could not imagine such a thing as possible. Yet they knew that the missionary was an honest and upright man; they could not doubt his word. Therefore they believed him, even though they could not understand. Dear children, if we believe the word of a man of good reputation, how much more ought we not to believe the word of God Himself, even though we cannot fully grasp the truths, which He tells us?

Aim. Today I am going to tell you about one of these truths, which is far above our understanding, but which God Himself has revealed to us. I am going to speak to you about the deepest truth of our Holy Faith: the doctrine of the Most Blessed Trinity—three Persons in One God.

Presentation. St. Augustine was one of the most learned men of all times or countries. A very interesting story is told of him. This great saint and wise man thought a great deal about the Most Blessed Trinity; for he intended to write a book on One God in Three Divine Persons. One day he took a walk along the seashore to think over this great truth of our holy Faith. After walking some time and meditating deeply, he believed that he had found out all about the Blessed Trinity. So he turned back to go home and write it down at once, lest he forget it. Suddenly he noticed a little child of heavenly loveliness sitting on the sand near the water's edge. The little child had made a hole in the sand and was busily engaged in dipping water from the sea into the small hole he had made. The hole was already full, and every time the child poured water into it, the water would run back into the sea. But the child continued to dip water and to pour it into the hole. St. Augustine stood for a while and watched this performance. Finally he said: "My little fellow, what are you doing there?" The little child replied: "I

am going to empty this immense sea into this little hole." The saint laughed heartily at this answer. But the child replied with great earnestness: "Listen, Augustine! It is far easier for me to empty the whole sea into this little hole, than for you with your little mind to understand and grasp fully the infinitely deep mystery of the Being of God, of the Most Blessed Trinity!" St. Augustine ceased his foolish and idle curiosity. He bowed his head in deep humility and adored God. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost"—that was his daily prayer.

Explanation. 1. a) This is indeed a very interesting little story. St. Augustine, the great Bishop of Hippo in Africa, while strolling along the seashore was piously meditating on God. He had often heard the bishop and the priests speak of God Almighty. When he was baptized, he recited those words of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God, the Father; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son; I believe in the Holy Ghost." After he was made a priest and a bishop, he loved to preach to the people, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three Divine Persons really distinct from one another and equal in all things. He loved to teach the people and the children, that the Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Ghost is God; and yet, that there are not three gods, but only one God. Of course, many a time he asked himself the question: "But how can all this be so?" He would argue with himself in this way: "Here are John and James and Joseph. Each one of these three is a person. Now these three persons are not only one man; they are three men. The Father is a Person; the Son is a Person; the Holy Ghost is a Person. Ought I not in like manner to say: Therefore, there are three gods?" But no. St. Augustine believed just as we believe. The three Divine Persons are not three gods; **the three Divine Persons are one and the same God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

b) "But *why* are not the three Divine Persons three

gods?"—That is the question St. Augustine asked himself time and again; that is what he was thinking about, while strolling up and down the beach. "I have a body and a soul," he must have said to himself on that occassion. "They belong to me. If I did not have a body and a soul, I would not be a human person, a man. My body and my soul belong to me. They make me what I am, a human being, a man. They are my "nature and substance" *(write these words on the blackboard)*. I possess human nature and substance, that is, I have everything that belongs to a man. So too, to a tree belong roots, trunk, branches, leaves. All of these things are the nature and the substance of the tree. Everything that has this nature and substance is a tree. So too, God has His Nature and Substance. By that I mean whatever belongs to God. God is all wise, all powerful, all holy, all merciful, eternal, etc. The Perfections of God are called the Nature and Substance of God, or His Divine Nature and Substance. Therefore, **the words "nature and substance" mean whatever necessarily belongs to a thing.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard)*.

Then St. Augustine continued to argue with himself in this way. "Now every man has a human nature, a body and a soul. And yet, every man has a body and a soul different from every other man. Every man has the nature and substance of a man for himself; every man has his own nature and substance. That is the reason why all men are not one and the same human being, or man, but different human beings, or men. All men have indeed the same kind of nature and substance; but no two men have indeed one and the same, the identical nature and substance. For each man has his own body and soul, his own nature and substance. Therefore among men three persons are not only one man; three persons are three men, for each human person is a man."

"Now it is different in regard to God. Each one of the Divine Persons has one and the same, the iden-

tical, Divine Nature and Substance. Each one of the three Divine Persons has the very same Divine Perfections. The Father is a Spirit infinitely perfect; the Son is one and the same Spirit infinitely perfect; the Holy Ghost is one and the same Spirit infinitely perfect. The Father has infinite Understanding or Wisdom; the Son has one and the same infinite Understanding or Wisdom; the Holy Ghost has one and the same infinite Understanding or Wisdom. The Father is all wise, all powerful, all holy, eternal; the Son is likewise all wise, all powerful, all holy, eternal; the Holy Ghost is all wise, all powerful, all holy, eternal. The one Divine Nature and Substance is the very same in each one of the three Divine Persons. It is whole and entire in the Father; it is whole and entire in the Son; it is whole and entire in the Holy Ghost. The Divine Nature and Substance, the Divine Perfections, belong wholly and entirely to each one of the three Divine Persons. Therefore each one of the three Divine Persons is true God. And yet, there is but one God, not three gods, for none of the three Divine Persons has the Divine Nature and Substance, the Divine Perfections, for Himself alone. The Divine Nature and Substance is common to the three Divine Persons. They are in one and the same, the identical, Divine Nature and Substance. Therefore Christ says: "The Father and I are one" (John x, 30); therefore St. John (I, v, 7) says: "There are three that give testimony in Heaven: the Father, the Word (or Son), and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Our Catechism teaches the same truth in the words: **The three Divine Persons are one and the same God, having the same Divine Nature and Substance.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. Dear children, who was the little child on the seashore, that spoke to St. Augustine?—He was an angel of the Lord. This little fellow wanted to empty the great ocean into the little hole he had dug in the sand. St. Augustine had to laugh at this childish foolishness. But what did the angel answer him?—Do you under-

stand what the angel wanted to say by those words?—"Augustine, do not think too curiously! You can never understand the Most Blessed Trinity. Small as is the hole in the sand, so small is your understanding, but great as is the ocean, so great and infinitely greater is the Most Blessed Trinity—one God in three Divine Persons—the triune God. It is a mystery, that surpasses all understanding."

There have been very few people as learned as St. Augustine. But not even he could understand everything, least of all the Most Adorable Trinity. The angel, who spoke to the saint, certainly knew much more. Why he was permitted to be with God always and to see Him face to face and to adore Him. But he could not fully understand this great truth. There is only one who can grasp it fully—God alone. Indeed, man by his reason alone could never have known that in one God there are three Divine Persons. Much less can man by his reason alone fully understand *how* it is possible, that the three Divine Persons are one and the same God. In the Old Testament men knew nothing of this great truth. At most they could only have suspected it, because God said: "Let *us* make man to *our* own image and likeness." It was only after Jesus had come from Heaven to earth, that He revealed or made known this truth to us. When did He tell us about it? *(Review the preceding lesson.* He told us this truth on the occasion of His Baptism in the Jordan and when He sent His disciples forth to preach and to baptize). Now we know it without a doubt, for Jesus, the Son of God, has told it to us. **We cannot fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God, because it is a mystery.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. St. Augustine knew that there is but one God in the three Divine Persons, because God Himself had told him through Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. And God can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is, therefore, absolutely true. But try as hard as he would,

he could never have known that there is one God in three Divine Persons, unless God had revealed it. And even then he could never fully grasp how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God. It is a mystery. What then is a mystery?—**A mystery is a truth, which we cannot fully understand.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Dear children, there are many other truths in our holy religion, which we cannot fully understand. For instance, we cannot fully understand, how the Son of God became a man; how Jesus is really and truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; how a child is made a child of God at Baptism—all these truths are mysteries, which we can only believe but never fully understand. St. Augustine too, even though he was such a learned man, could not fully grasp these truths; he could only believe them just as we believe them. There are, however, certain truths in our holy Faith, which we could have discovered by our own reason alone. For instance, that there is a God; that there is but *one* God; that God is eternal; that God knows all things; that our soul is immortal. We must believe these truths, too, even though we cannot understand them; for God has revealed them to us together with the other truths. We can, however, understand the mysteries of our holy Faith *to a certain extent* by means of examples. We can never understand them *fully,* because they are mysteries. A mystery is a truth, which we cannot fully understand.

Write on the blackboard:

1. a) Father, Son, Holy Ghost—One and same God.
   b) Father, Son, Holy Ghost—same Divine Nature and Substance.
   Nature and substance—whatever necessarily belongs to a thing.
2. Three Divine Persons are one and same God—a mystery.
3. A mystery—a truth we cannot fully understand.

Synthesis. Let us now review briefly what we have just learned concerning the Most Blessed Trinity. How many Persons are there in God? Is each one of these three Divine Persons God? How many gods are there? Why are they one and the same God? What do you mean by the words "nature and substance?" What kind of a nature have you? Tell me, what is the nature and substance of a tree? What kind of a nature and substance has God? Does each one of the three Divine Persons possess the Divine Nature and Substance? Has each one of the Divine Persons this Nature and Substance alone for Himself, or has He it in common with the other Divine Persons? Can we understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God? What do we call a truth, which we cannot fully understand? Tell me some other mysteries in our holy Faith? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. The three Divine Persons are one and the same God, because they have the same Divine Nature and Substance. We cannot fully understand this truth, for it is a mystery.—St. Augustine is long since a saint in Heaven. Now he sees the triune God face to face. He does not have to believe any longer. We, too, believe in the Most Blessed Trinity, and we must believe in it as long as we live on earth. But we ought not to search too curiously into this great mystery. That is dangerous. God Himself warned St. Augustine of that danger by means of the angel.—In a little booklet, called the Imitation of Christ, which is truly worth its weight in gold, we read the words: "Whoever searches too curiously into God's majesty, will be overcome by His glory." Do you understand what that means?—If you look too intently into the dazzling brightness of the sun, curious to know what there is there, you will be blinded by its light; for the eye cannot stand so much light and brightness. Now the triune God is the sun of Heaven. Whoever

searches too intently into that sun will lose his sight—Divine Faith. Therefore like St. Augustine we will believe humbly; then we shall one day be allowed to look at the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity in Heaven and with the angels and saints kneel in adoration before the throne of the triune God.

2. Dear children, you ought to thank the triune God, who has done so much good to you. The Father out of pure love has created you. But do not forget, that He has created you for Himself! Honor your heavenly Father by living as dear children of God. The Son of God out of pure love has redeemed you. Bear in mind, that He redeemed you without your help. He will not save you unless you do your part. The Holy Ghost out of pure love has sanctified you. Therefore never forget that you must become saints; for there are only saints in Heaven.

3. At your entrance into this world the priest baptized you in the name of the Most Blessed Trinity. At your departure out of this world, he will bless your soul in the name of the same Most Blessed Trinity. He will say: "Depart, O Christian soul, out of this sinful world, in the name of God, the Father Almighty; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered and died for you; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified you." See how precious your soul is in the sight of the triune God! Never forget that.

LESSON IX.

God and the World.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Who made the world? L. I, Q. 1.

2) Who created heaven and earth and all things? L. IV, Q. 32.

3) How did God create heaven and earth? L. IV, Q. 33.

4) Who is God? L. I, Q. 2.

Preparation. Dear children, the deepest mystery of our holy Faith is the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity. No man, no angel, only God can fully understand this wonderful truth. Let us review the meaning of this mystery. *(Question the children on the preceding lesson).* In the first article of the Apostles' Creed we say: "I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth." Thereby we profess our Faith in the truth, that God made the world. What do we mean by the word "world"?—We mean our earth and everything upon it; we mean the visible heavens with the sun, the moon and the stars. We mean also the invisible heavens with the angels. There is only one who does not belong to the world—Almighty God alone. The world, therefore, is everything except God. Now, every reasonable being must sooner or later ask the question: Whence comes this world? It surely could not have made itself; therefore some one else must have made it.

Aim. Today I am going to help you to understand the meaning of these words: "Creator of heaven and earth."

Presentation. From all eternity God resolved to create the world. When the time was come to carry out this plan, the Almighty made all things. The Bible tells us in the first book, called Genesis, how God made the world. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But the earth was void and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved over the waters. Then God said: "Let there be light!" and light was made. God separated the light from the darkness; the light He called Day and the darkness Night.—That was the first day of creation.

Thereupon God said: "Let there be a firmament made amidst the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters." And it was made. The beautiful vault of heaven appeared and a part of the waters ascended to the heavens.—That was the second day.

Then God said: "Let the waters that are under the heavens be gathered into one place; and let the dry land appear." And it happened as God willed. He called the dry land Earth and the water that was gathered into one place Sea. And God said: "Let the land bring forth the green herb and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind." The earth became beautiful as in the springtime.—That was the third day of creation.

Then God said: "Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for the seasons, and for days and for years." Immediately the sun was made to rule the day; and the moon and the stars to illumine the night.—That was the fourth day of creation.

Then God said: "Let the waters bring forth the creeping creatures having life, and the fowl that they may fly over the earth under the firmament of heaven." At once were made fishes and birds of every kind.—That was the fifth day of creation.

Then God said: "Let the earth bring forth the living creature in its kind: cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was done as God commanded. At last God said: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness! He shall rule over the fishes of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the animals. and over the whole earth." And God made man according to His image. He formed him from the dust of the earth and breathed the breath of life into his face. Thus man was made into a living being, and God called him Adam.—That was the sixth day of creation.

Thus were completed the heavens and the earth and all their ornaments. Then God rested on the seventh day from all the work He had done. He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Explanation. 1. Dear children, there is one thing that especially strikes me in this story of the creation of the world. In the first place the Bible tells us: "In

the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and immediately it adds the words: "On the first day God created the light." What does this mean?—It means that in the beginning God created the matter out of which the heavens and the earth were to be formed. That was the *first* creation. Only then did God form and fashion the heavens and the earth from that matter. That was the *second* creation. Now you will understand why the Bible says: "The earth was void and empty." Just as the waves of the sea roll hither and thither in a storm, so too on the earth everything tossed and tumbled about in a topsy-turvy fashion. There was no order anywhere. Learned men tell us, that this matter, out of which the heavens and the earth were made, was an immense mass of fire. Perhaps that was so. Even now the interior of the earth is filled with fire. Think of the volcanoes and of the boiling springs in various parts of the world. The sun, too, is a great ball of fire. At the end of the world the earth will be destroyed by fire and a new earth will be formed. In the beginning, therefore, this matter, out of which the heavens and the earth were formed, was without order. Only gradually, in six days, did God create a beautiful and wise order in the heavens and the earth.

Who did all this?—It was God, and no one else, who made the world and all that it contains. He first made the heavens and the angels; next He made the earth and all the things we see above us and around us. He made the sun, that shines over our heads; He made the moon, and the stars, that sparkle in the blue skies. He made the earth, and the great mountains, that rise out of the earth. He made the great seas, and the rivers that flow into the seas. He made the green grass that we see in the fields, and the flowers, and the trees, that grow on the hillside and in the meadows. He made the birds that fly in the air, and the fishes that swim in the waters, and all the beasts, that walk upon the earth. Every grain of sand, every leaf, every in-

sect, everything was made by God. Man, too, is the work of God's hands. There is nothing in the heavens above and on the earth below that has not been made by God Almighty. **God made the world.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. *When* did God do all this?—The Bible tells us that God made the world in the short space of six days. But the days of creation are not days such as we have here on earth. They were God's days; therefore they are days of long periods of time. "With God a thousand years are as one day." Moreover, you will remember, that four of the days were already past, before the sun was formed. Therefore the days spoken of could not have been days as we understand that word. But why does the Bible use the word "day"?—The week of creation was intended by God to be a pattern of our present week of seven days. We work on six days of the week and rest on the seventh day, which we call the Lord's day (the Sabbath), or the day of rest.

3. But *how* did God do all this?—Before the world was made, nothing existed except God alone. He lived, therefore, long before the stars appeared in the heavens. There was no sun as yet; there were no mountains; no rivers on the earth. God alone existed: the Triune God—the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. From all eternity God decreed to make the world, the heavens with its stars, the earth with all that it contains. Therefore, "in the beginning," that is, in the beginning of time God said: "Let it be made!" and all things were made. The Almighty used nothing out of which to make the world. He merely willed that all things should be made, and all were made out of nothing by the mere power of His word. The Psalmist says: "He (the Lord) spoke and they were made: He commanded and they were created" (Ps. xxxii, 9). Yes, they were created, that is, they were made out of nothing by the mere power of God's word. **God**

created the heavens and the earth—out of nothing by His word only, that is, by a single act of His all-powerful Will. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Let us see how He did this more in detail. On the first day God said: "Let there be light!" and the light was made out of nothing. Before this there was no light. On the second day He said: "Let there be a firmament made amidst the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters!" At once the firmament or the star bespangled sky was made out of nothing by the power of God's word. On the third day the Almighty said: "Let the waters be gathered together into one place; and let the dry land appear!" Immediately the seas and the earth with its continents and islands, its mountains and valleys were made out of nothing by the mere power of God's word. The earth brought forth green herbs and plants and flowers of every kind. On the fourth day God said: "Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day and the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years!" At once the shining bodies on the heavens, the sun, and the moon, and the stars were made out of nothing by a single act of the all-powerful will of God. Day and night, and the various seasons of the year began to come and go in regular order. On the fifth day God said: "Let the waters bring forth the creeping creatures having life, and the fowl that fly over the earth under the firmament of heaven!" Immediately countless fishes filled the waters of the earth and numberless birds began to fly through the broad spaces of the air. They were all made out of nothing by the all-powerful will of the Almighty. On the sixth day God said: "Let the earth bring forth the living creature in its kind: cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth according to their kinds!" At once the animals of the earth were made out of nothing, in order to proclaim the power of their Maker by their number, and variety, and greatness, and strength, and cleverness,

and also to serve and to nourish man, to clothe him, and to labor for man's benefit. At last God made the most perfect and noblest of all earthly creatures, man. God made man to be the crown of all earthly creation by the mere power of His word. He gave man dominion over all the earth. You see, therefore, dear children, how God made the world. "Let it be made" —that is what He said, and at once everything came into being out of nothing. God created all things out of nothing. To "create" means to make something out of nothing. *(Repeat the two answers stated above).*

4. Only God could do this; He alone can create. For a creator is one, who makes something out of nothing. The most skillful workman cannot create anything. All that he can do is to give shape and form to things, that already exist. For example, a man cannot build a house without stones, without timber, without mortar, and many other things. If he has none of these things, he cannot build anything. God alone can do this; God alone can create. **God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* When a certain widow with her seven sons was brought before King Antiochus, as the Bible History tells us, this brave woman did not lose courage. She saw how six of her sons were martyred before her eyes under the most cruel torments. When the seventh boy, a mere youth, was led in the king advised the mother to speak to her son for his own good. The mother then addressed him with all the affection of her heart, saying: "My son, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them; and consider that God made them out of nothing, and mankind also; so thou shalt not fear this tormentor, but, being made a worthy partner with thy brethren, receive death, that in that mercy I may receive thee again with thy brethren." This brave mother and her seven sons believed just as we believe. Yes, God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things.

Write on the blackboard:

1. God made the world.
2. He made all things—out of nothing—He *created* all.
3. God is the *Creator* of all.

Synthesis. Let us now review what we have just learned. Who made the world? What do you mean by the world? Who made the angels? In how many days did God make the world? Are the days of creation the same as our days of twenty-four hours? What did God make on the first day? the second, etc.? How did God make all things? What does the word "create" mean? Why do we call God the "Creator" of all things? Can we create anything? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. God created the world.—Once a certain king invited several noblemen to a banquet, in order to dedicate in a worthy manner the new throne room in his palace. This hall was a magnificent work of art, a real masterpiece. It was crowned by a mighty dome, but not a single column was visible to the eyes. The walls were covered with costly paintings; the floor was adorned with rich carpets and rugs. The king, proud of his glorious work, took his guests in person on a tour of inspection about the hall and rejoiced when he heard the exclamations of wonder from the lips of his friends. In the company was the court jester, a fool, whose duty it was to entertain the guests with jokes and pleasantries. This man went up to the king and his friends and said: "King! I can show you a more beautiful and artistic throne room than yours." Going to the window, he opened it, and pointed to the heavens above, saying, "Do you see the great immeasurable vault of heaven? Not a single column holds up that dome and yet, it does not fall. Is not that something entirely different from this dome in this tiny throne room? Look out into the dis-

tance and admire the glorious carpets of grass and flowers that cover the ground! Do not these far surpass the carpets made by men's hands? And who made all this? God by a single act of His all-powerful will —out of nothing. The great Architect in the Heavens did not need workmen, nor lime, nor mortar, nor a single penny. What do you say to that?"—But the guests remained silent and looked at the fool in wonder. But in their own hearts they were obliged to acknowledge: "This time the fool spoke a wise word indeed." Yes, dear children, so often we admire the art of men and their works, and the great building of this world, which was made by the mere word of the Creator, does not fill us with gratitude and holy wonder! How foolish we men are, because we do not think in our hearts!

2. God created the world.—He also created you. Why did the Creator give you life?—God did not have any need of you or of any man. He gave you life out of pure love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," He says to each one of us. He wants to make you happy. "Thou hast created us, O God, for Thyself." Therefore you must live and labor for the honor and glory of God. Then you will be really happy for time and for eternity. God preserves the world.—He also preserves you in life. Yes, He gives you life every moment of your existence. Perhaps you have never thought of that seriously. How good God is to you! And what thanks does He receive? One would hardly think it possible. And yet, it is true: New sins continually, that is the thanks the Lord Almighty receives. Am I wrong? Did not you yourselves often do that? What reward will you receive for such conduct? See, God holds us all in His Almighty hand! He holds every one who commits a mortal sin over the deep, deep abyss of Hell. He has only to withdraw His hand and the poor sinner will fall into the horrible abyss. This is enough to make us shudder with fear. Therefore fear God and fear sin!

3. Let us now profess our Faith in the Almighty power of God. Let us say together: "O my God! I firmly believe, that Thou hast created heaven and earth and all things out of nothing by the mere power of Thy word. Amen."

LESSON X.

(I) The Angels.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What are the angels? L. IV, Q. 35.
2) Were the angels created for any other purpose? L. IV, Q. 36.

Preparation. Dear children, there is a visible world and God created it. You learned about that in the last lesson. Let us review this teaching briefly. *(Question the pupils on this subject).*—But there is also an invisible world—the world of the pure spirits, who are called angels. The Bible History mentions many cases, where the angels appeared to men. Do you know of any of these cases?—Which of the angels should you honor especially?—Do you know any prayer in honor of the Guardian Angels?

Aim. Today I am going to speak to you about the angels: I am going to teach you who the angels are and why God made them.

Presentation. Before God created the visible world, He called into existence an invisible world of pure spirits. The Almighty said: "Let us make the angels according to our image and likeness. They are to live with Me in Heaven. They are to stand before My throne and serve Me and sing My praises. They are to be My messengers and to protect and guard the children of men in all their ways." That is what God said, when He was about to make the heavenly hosts of the angels. Immediately countless pure spirits stood before the throne of God, one more beautiful and

lovely than the other. All were filled with grace and shone brightly in the splendor of glory. They began to glorify God and to adore Him singing: "Holy, holy, holy!" But God said to them: "Remain faithful to Me in holy love, and you will possess the joys of Heaven forever!" After Adam sinned, God sent an angel to Paradise to guard the entrance. He sent His holy angels also to His chosen people, the Jews, with messages. His angels still guide and protect us, His children, day and night, from the cradle to the grave.

Explanation. 1. Dear children, would you not like to have been present, when the Almighty said: "Let us make the angels according to our image and likeness?" —Would you not like to have heard how the angels sang their first canticle of praise to the Lord: "Holy, holy, holy?"—That must have been a wonderful sight, when suddenly all the angels stood before the throne of God in the Heavens! Let us look at the angels a little more carefully. What are the angels?—In a picture the angels are generally represented in human form, in the shape of men. They often appeared to men in this way. For instance the archangel Raphael appeared to Tobias as a young man and acted as his guide and protector, as the Bible History informs us. In the same way the archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary, when he brought her the message that she was to become the Mother of God. Likewise at the sepulchre of Our Blessed Saviour the angels appeared in the form and shape of young men, and the same was the case, when Jesus ascended into Heaven. Now tell me, have the angels really the form and shape of men? —Did not God say: "Let us make the angels according to our image and likeness?"—But God is a spirit without a body, a pure spirit. Therefore the angels, too, are spirits without a body; they are pure spirits. Of course, God is the greatest Spirit; the angels are only little spirits. For in God's sight everything is like the little dew drop, that hangs on the blade of grass in the early morning sunlight. **The angels are pure spirits**

without a body. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Therefore the angels cannot be seen with the eyes of our body, unless they take on the appearance of a body. The Bible tells us of many appearances of the angels to mankind. An angel went to Mary and *spoke* to her. Now whoever speaks, can think and will;—he has a spirit. Again the angel, that came to Tobias said to him: "I *seemed* indeed to eat and drink with you; but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men" (Tobias ii, 19). By these words the angel meant to say: "I have no body. I have only a spirit. I have an invisible food. I must take on a body, for otherwise you cannot see me and hear me." That is the reason why the angels are represented in pictures and statues with a body. We picture the angels with a beautiful form, to express their heavenly beauty and glory. Sometimes we depict them as little children, to remind ourselves that they are immortal and ever young. At other times we represent the angels with wings, to express the swiftness with which they pass from place to place. The angels sometimes appear in pictures and statues with outstretched wings, as a sign that they are ever ready to go where God may send them. The birds are swift in their movements; the wind is even swifter. But the angels are much swifter in their actions than the birds and the wind. Sometimes we represent the angels with lilies in their hands, to show their spotless purity. Sometimes we picture them with harps and trumpets in their hands, to signify that they are always engaged in singing the praises of the Lord. At other times we represent the angels without a body, that is with only a head and wings, to show that they are pure spirits endowed with understanding and free will.

2. a) I suppose you would like to know how many angels Almighty God created. God did not reveal that to us; therefore I cannot tell you. But when we get to Heaven, we shall know. One thing we are sure

of, and that is, that the number of the angels is very, very large. The Prophet Daniel (vii, 10) once had a vision. He was permitted to look into Heaven. He relates to us what he saw on that occasion. He says: "Thousands of thousands ministered unto Him (the Lord), and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him." He means to say: "I saw so many, many angels, that I could not count them all." St. John, the Evangelist and Apostle, also saw a vision of Heaven and he says: "Their number was a thousand times a thousand" (Apoc. v, 11). Yes, it would be easier to count the stars in the heavens than to tell the number of the angels around the throne of Almighty God. **God created countless angels.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Are the angels all equal?—No, they are divided into nine choirs or classes—one above the other—like grades in a school. The rank and glory of the angels is determined by the amount of the gifts that God has bestowed on them and by the office He has assigned to them. The Bible mentions nine choirs of angels, that sing the praises of the Lord unceasingly. They are: angels, archangels, powers, principalities, virtues, dominations, thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim (Eph. i, 21; Col. i, 16). Nearest to the throne of God are the Seraphim, who are all burning with love of their Creator; next to them are the Cherubim, who are distinguished by the greatness of their knowledge. The archangels are greater than simple angels. Holy Scripture gives us the names of three archangels: St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. Raphael. It was St. Michael, who drove the wicked angels from Heaven into Hell. He cried out: "Who is like to God?" Therefore he was called Michael, which in English means: "Who is like to God?" He is the protector of the Church of Christ. His Feast occurs on September 29. St. Raphael guided and protected the young Tobias on his journey and gave him a medicine to cure his father's blindness. The name Raphael means in English "med-

icine of God." His Feast occurs on the twenty-fourth of October. St. Gabriel means in English "the power and strength of God." He was sent by God to the Prophet Daniel, to announce to him the time of the Redeemer's birth. He also came by God's command to the High Priest Zachary, the father of St. John the Baptist, to tell him, that he would have a son, who was to point out the Redeemer of the world to the people. Finally Gabriel also came to the Blessed Virgin, to tell her that God had chosen her to be the Mother of the world's Redeemer. His Feast is celebrated each year on the 18th of March.

3. Now let us see *why* God created the angels. When the Almighty made the angels out of nothing by the mere power of His word, He said: "Let the angels be made to adore and praise the Lord their God!" Scarcely had He spoken, when countless angels came forth out of nothing and standing before His throne, they began to sing their songs of praise, that will never cease. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts. The whole world is filled with His glory" (Is. vi, 3); "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come; honor and benediction to Him that sitteth on the throne, who liveth forever and forever" (Apoc. iv, 8). "Glory be to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke ii, 14) —that was the song the angels sang on the first Christmas night. "Amen, benediction and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor and power, and strength to our God forever and forever. Amen" (Apoc. vii, 12)—thus did the angels sing before the throne of the Almighty in the heavenly Jerusalem, as St. John tells us. The angels see God, who is so good, so beautiful, so glorious, and liveliest joy and gladness fill them to overflowing. Just as a good father loves to please his dear children, so the good God bestows happiness without measure on the angels, His most dear creatures, who reflect His own glory in the most perfect manner. **The angels are created to adore and**

enjoy God in Heaven. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Dear children, do you not sincerely desire to be one day united with these pure spirits, to sing with them the praises of the Lord?—Well then, be angels here, and imitate the purity and holiness of these heavenly spirits, and you will surely enjoy God as they enjoy Him now and forever.

4. a) The triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, sits on His throne in the Heavens, the Lord of the visible and invisible creation. Countless angels, the most perfect of His creatures, surround Him as servants and ministers of the heavenly court. They are like a bright crown of stars that enclose the glorious sun. The Seraphim are there burning with love. The Cherubim are there endowed with intelligence inferior only to that of God Himself and adoring His infinite wisdom. The Thrones are there worshiping God, the same yesterday, today and forever. On them the Eternal God rests as on a throne. The Dominations are there bowing down in deep adoration before the omnipotence of God and having power in His name over all creation. The Principalities are there crowned like kings, the servants of the King of kings. The Powers are there, God's ministers, to work wonders in His name, to awaken the tempests and the whirlwinds, to send forth the lightning. The Archangels are there, to announce to man the mighty works of God. The Angels are there, the ordinary ministers of God's will, having charge over the destinies of men. All this heavenly host surrounds the Almighty and "assists at the throne of the Lord of Heaven and earth." They serve and minister unto Him, always ready to do anything that He requests. When He speaks, they answer: "Here we are!" They receive His orders with joy; they perform them with eagerness, fulfilling His will with a swiftness that surpasses the swiftness of the winds. Yes, **the angels were created to assist before the throne of God and to**

minister unto Him. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) But the Almighty created the angels for another purpose. He often sent them down from Heaven to earth to bear His messages to men, and to make the plans of His goodness, justice and mercy known to us poor mortals. Sometimes the angels have spoken in a voice of thunder to the wicked, and at other times in accents of joy and kindness to the good. You will recall, that God sent an angel with a fiery sword, to tell our first parents that they must leave the Garden of Paradise. He sent His angels to Abraham and Lot, to announce to them, that the Lord had taken them under His special protection, but that He was about to lay His hand in anger on the impure cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Angels were sent to the shepherds of Bethlehem, to announce the birth of the Saviour. An angel came to console Christ, while He was in the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. The angels have come to men on very many occasions to speak to them concerning God's holy will. Yes, that is the reason why these pure spirits are called angels; for the word "angel" is derived from the Greek language, and in English it means "messenger." Our Catechism says: **The angels have often been sent as messengers from God to man.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*). Dear children, the ready and willing obedience of these pure spirts, in fulfilling God's commands, should teach you to cease being slothful and negligent in the service of God, and to perform willingly and joyfully everything that He requires of you.

c) Long before God created the angels and this visible world, that is from all eternity, He thought of us. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love"— that is what He says to each one of us. O, how good God is! Therefore He gave His angels charge over us, that they should continually watch over us and guard us safely through life. Our holy Faith tells us so. In the Bible we read the words: "He hath given His

angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Ps. xc, 11s). These angels never leave us, not even for a moment. They go out and come in with us, as St. Augustine says. Wherever we go they accompany us. From our birth they are hovering over us, and when we have breathed our last sigh, they will attend our souls to the judgment seat of God. Yes, the good angels love us, for we are destined to be with them forever in Heaven. Jacob saw a ladder reaching up to Heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending (Gen. xxviii, 12). This vision signifies that the angels come down from Heaven to earth to protect us, and ascend back again to Heaven to sing the praises of God and to carry our prayers to the throne of God. These holy angels, that protect us, are called Guardian Angels, because they watch over us and guard us from all danger. St. Paul (Heb. i, 14) says: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them that shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" The angels are also appointed our guardians. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard). (Show a large picture of the Angel Guardian).*

Dear children, not only do all the good angels love and protect us, but, as it is commonly believed, there is one angel in particular appointed by God for each one of us, to guard, to watch over and to protect us from the many dangers by which we are surrounded. When you became a child of God on the occasion of your Baptism, God was so pleased at what He saw in your soul, that He called one of His angels and commanded him to be ever at your side and to lead you back to your Father's home in Heaven. O, how good God is! The Guardian Angel is always at your side to protect you in body and soul. When the old Patriarch Jacob blessed his sons, he said: "The angel that delivereth me from all evils, bless these boys." You see, therefore, that an angel had always been at

Jacob's side, an invisible helper and comrade, a protector in body and soul against every evil. St. Peter was delivered out of prison by the hand of an angel (Acts of the Ap. xii, 12). Daniel was kept safe in the lions' den, and the three young men were preserved from death in the fiery furnace by the protecting hands of their Guardian Angels. These angels put good thoughts into our minds and move our wills to do what is good, that is, they speak within our hearts, saying: "Do this!" "Be obedient!" "Pray, study, obey for the love of God!" That is how the Guardian Angel speaks within our hearts and what he says comes from God.

Moreover, our Guardian Angel offers our prayers and our good works to God, that is, he prays for us before the throne of God for blessings in body and soul. Thus St. Raphael offered the prayers of Tobias (xii, 12) to God. Of course, the angels do this, not because God Himself does not hear us, but to make our prayers more acceptable to the Lord. We celebrate the Feast of the Guardian Angels each year on the second day of October.

Write on the blackboard:

1. The angels—pure spirits.
2. The angels were created:
   a) to adore and enjoy God;
   b) to assist and minister at God's throne;
   c) to be God's messengers;
   d) to be our guardians.

Synthesis. Let us review what we have just learned about the angels. What kind of a world did God create besides the visible world? In what words of the Apostles' Creed do we profess our Faith in this truth? What does the word "angel" mean? Have the angels a body? What are the angels? Have they understanding and free will? How many angels are there? Into how many classes are the angels divided? Name

some archangels. Why did God create the angels? What do the angels do before the throne of God? Does God send the angels into this world? Give me some examples. What do the angels do for us? What do we call the angels that watch over us? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. The blessed spirits praise God, the Lord, unceasingly and rejoice when men, too, sing hymns of praise to their God and Creator. Frequently the angels of God join in this holy work and share with us this heavenly duty, as St. Bernard tells us. Once he had a vision on the vigil of a certain feast. While the other religious of the convent were engaged in singing the Te Deum, that is, the hymn called "Holy God we praise Thy name," St. Bernard saw a great many angels enter into the choir. They were surrounded with a wonderful white light like the dazzling snow, their cheeks seemed like the roses of Paradise, and their eyes shone with heavenly joy. They showed a burning desire to sing the praises of the good God. Quickly they passed through the choir benches, where the brothers were singing the praises of the Lord. They spoke to some of the religious, in order to set the flame of devotion afire in their hearts. They encouraged others to continue their good work. They watched over all. St. Bernard himself was so moved by what he saw, that he resolved at once to praise God with greater fervor and to encourage his brethren to glorify God more fervently in union with the angels of the Lord. St. John Chrysostom told his friends that on a certain occasion, when he began to offer up the great Sacrifice of the Mass, he saw with his own eyes a great army of the heavenly spirits clothed in white garments appear in the church. Their eyes were turned toward the High Altar, while on bended knee they prayed in silence throughout the Mass. Then they scattered about the entire church, assisting the Bishop, the priests and the deacon, who were distribut-

ing Holy Communion to the people. They did this, partly, in order that this great act might be performed more fittingly and with greater holiness, partly, in order that they themselves might the longer behold the Body and Blood of the Lord beneath the appearances of bread and wine. Also outside of the Mass this holy Bishop saw the House of God filled with throngs of angels. What a shame for us to assist so often coldly and without devotion at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass! The angels of God kneel in adoration, and man—this worm of the earth, is ashamed to bend his knee! O, dear children, let us act as the angels of God!

2. When God created the world of the angels, He said: "They are to be My messengers; they are to protect and guard the children of men in all their ways!" —The Bible often speaks of the angels. Everywhere the angels appear, they are the messengers of God or the guardians of men. That is their work. Each one of you has an Angel Guardian. He walks at your side; he watches over you by day and in the silence of the night he spreads his wings over you. Many saints were permitted to see their Guardian Angels. For instance, St. Cecilia, St. Stanislaus. St. Frances of Rome tells us that her Angel Guardian was at her right side like a wonderful bright shining star. When she looked at him, she thought she saw the glorious sun, so beautifully did he shine in heavenly splendor. Whenever she prayed, her angel was there and prayed with her. When a temptation came upon her, at once she saw her Guardian Angel, her divine protector. He held his face always turned heavenwards. Dear children, such an angel is with each one of you. How good God is with us, His children! He wants to bring you into Heaven at any cost. Be thankful for this great blessing.

3. When the Angel Guardian speaks to you in your heart: "Pray; go away from this place; obey!" then listen to his voice; otherwise he will be obliged to ac-

cuse you before the throne of God, saying: "My child does not want to obey!" Let us dedicate ourselves each morning to the Angel Guardian, and especially in temptations let us call out to him for help.

"Angel of God! my Guardian dear;
To whom His love commits me here;
Ever this day be at my side;
To light and guard: to rule and guide me. Amen."

LESSON XI.

(II) The Angels.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Were the angels, as God created them, good and happy? L. IV, Q. 37.

2) Did all the angels remain good and happy? L. IV, Q. 38.

Preparation. Dear children, this visible world is not our true home. We are made for God and for Heaven. We are on a journey from earth to Heaven. Many dangers assail us on every side; many pitfalls lie hidden in the path over which we must pass. God in His goodness has given us a guide and a protector, to help us and assist us safely through all dangers and to lead us to our true home beyond the stars. Let me see how much you remember of this from the preceding class. *(Question briefly on the foregoing lesson).* —There are then good angels; but there are also bad angels or devils. St. Peter warns us against the wicked spirits, when he says: "Be sober and watch; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. v, 8). Yes, the devil is our enemy, for he is jealous of us. He knows that we are destined to take his place and the places of the other wicked spirits in Heaven. Would you not like to know more about these wicked spirits, so that you may the more easily resist them?

Aim. Today we shall consider the sin of the angels and the evil work they are doing in this world.

Presentation. Almighty God is seated on His throne in the Heavens. He speaks the words: "Let us make the angels according to our image and likeness." At once numberless pure spirits, filled with grace and resplendent in glory more beautiful than the sun, stand before the Creator. With joy and gladness they begin to sing God's praises and the Heavens re-echo with their happy songs.

But alas! this happy state of things does not endure forever. God wanted to test the obedience of His angels. One day He gathered them all before Him and said: "Listen, ye angels! to what I have to announce to you. A mystery, great and wonderful, I must reveal to you. The day will come, when My only begotten Son, My dearly beloved Son, will descend from Heaven to earth. He will become a poor human child in order to redeem the weak, sinful men of earth. Then all the angels and men shall adore Him forever!" Scarcely had God spoken these words, when one of the highest and most beautiful of the angels, Lucifer by name, rose up. "I will not adore Him!" he proudly said before the throne of the Most High God. And many thousands of angels followed him, all crying out: "We, too, will not adore Him, for we are angels!"

At that very moment the archangel, Michael, came forth from the ranks of the heavenly spirits. He confronted Lucifer and cried out: "Who is like to God?" —A mighty battle began between the good and the wicked spirits. Then God in holy anger cried out, so that the Heavens re-echoed the words of thunder: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" Then Michael at the head of the good angels cast Lucifer and the wicked angels from Heaven. Just as lightning falls from the heavens in a storm, so the wicked spirits fell into the abyss of Hell. There they remain forever excluded from the vision of Almighty God. They wander about the earth, hating God and man. In their

anger they try to lead men into sin, because they cannot do harm directly. But to the good angels God said: "Come ye blessed, and possess the kingdom of Heaven!" They see God face to face and adore Him in joy forever. They are ever at our side leading us to God and guarding us against our enemies, the fallen angels.

Explanation. 1. When God created the angels and they appeared for the first time before His throne, He was pleased with them. You can well understand that. A child often looks like its mother; is the image and the likeness of its mother. Therefore the mother is pleased with her child. So too when God looked at the angels, He saw in them His own image and likeness. Therefore He was pleased with them. Almighty God is infinitely holy. The angels were also holy through and through; there was not the faintest shadow of sin in them. They were full of grace and love and therefore wonderfully beautiful. Did you ever notice a rainbow in the sky?—What a glorious sight to behold! It consists of millions and millions of drops of rain; and every drop catches up a ray of sunlight and reflects the splendor of the sun in countless shining rays. Scarcely had God created the angels, when they hovered about His throne like a glorious rainbow. In every angel there was a ray of the marvelous beauty and loveliness of God. And God saw this splendor and was pleased at the sight. The Prophet Daniel (x, 5s) once had a vision of angels. This is how he describes what he saw. "I lifted up my eyes and I saw: and I beheld a man clothed in linen, and his body was like chrysolite, and his loins girded with the finest gold: and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as a burning lamp: and his arms, and all downward even to his feet like in appearance to glittering brass. And the voice of his word like the voice of a multitude. And when I heard, I lay in a consternation upon my face." How beautiful this angel must have been! How good and holy! The

angels rejoiced in the presence of God. They did not know what sorrow and sufferings meant. Their life was filled with every happiness, and they sang all the day. That is what our Catechism says: **The angels, as God created them, were good and happy.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Dear children, the angels were not only holy and happy, they possessed many other wonderful gifts. God knows all things. Now when He created the angels, He gave them some of the crumbs of His own wonderful knowledge and wisdom. Consequently the angels could at once sing the most glorious songs of praise before His throne. There have been many wise and learned men in this world. Solomon was the wisest of all the kings of earth. The entire world was astonished at his wisdom. Just think of St. Augustine. I know of a certain cardinal (Joseph Mezzofanti), who could speak thirty-six languages. He was a whole world of wonders. But Solomon himself and St. Augustine and this learned cardinal, when compared with the least of the angels, are as ignorant as a little child in comparison with the most learned man of the world. We know that too, from Jesus' own words. Once He prophesied concerning the coming of the judgment at the end of the world. He says: "The day and the hour no one knoweth, not even the angels of God" (Mat. xxiv, 36). The angels, therefore, must possess wonderful *knowledge and wisdom.*

God is almighty. But God gave some of His own stupendous *power* to His angels. We see that from what happened, when the angels were cast out of Heaven. St. Michael thrust out Lucifer and his followers "with mighty power" into the abyss of Hell. How is St. Michael, therefore, represented in pictures and statues?—When the three young men were in the fiery furnace of Babylon, an angel of the Lord came and scattered the flames outside the furnace and these servants of God remained unhurt; not a hair of their

heads was touched. St. Peter was a prisoner in his dungeon. The next day he was to be put to death. Suddenly an angel of God entered his prison, awakened the Apostle from his sleep and said: "Arise quickly!" Then the iron chains fell from his hands and feet. St. Peter and the angel passed the guard safely. The great iron door of the prison opened of itself and St. Peter was a free man, saved by the mighty power of God's angel. One angel put 185,000 soldiers of King Senacherib to death in one night, as we read in our Bible History (Is. xxxvii, 36).

Wonderful holiness and beauty, great knowledge and wisdom, mighty power—such are the splendid gifts of the angels of the Lord. Thus did God endow His angels, when He created them. Their life was filled to overflowing with joy and happiness. Yes, the angels, as God created them, were good and holy and happy and clothed with glorious gifts.

2. a) Dear children, the angels were to give proof, that they were really worthy of Heaven; for no one is crowned without a struggle, as St. Paul says (II Tim. ii, 5). Now then, how did God test the angels?—Lucifer was the first to rebel against the Almighty. He had entirely forgotten that he owed all that he possessed to God alone. He became dissatisfied and proud, and in his pride of heart he refused to obey the Lord. "I will not serve!" was his proud answer to God. Many thousands of the heavenly spirits followed him in his sin. Immediately they lost their wondrous dignity. God had chosen them for His service and placed them around His throne. By sin they lost this great dignity. They lost sanctifying grace. O how deeply are they fallen! They lost their happiness, too. Dwelling in Heaven they had the fulness of joy. But all that is now no more. St. John says: "Their place was found no longer in the Heavens" (Apoc. xxii, 8). **All the angels did not remain good and happy; many of them sinned.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) God's punishment pursued them at once. The Prophet Isaias (xiv, 12s) saw this in a vision. "How art thou fallen from Heaven, Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning? How art thou fallen to earth? Thou didst say in thy heart: I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. But yet, thou shalt be brought down to Hell, unto the depth of the pit." Who is this morning star?—Our Blessed Saviour said: "I saw Satan like lightning falling from Heaven" (Luke x, 18). Not only has Lucifer fallen, but with him all his followers and they are buried in Hell. Before their sin there was no Hell. It was created by God at the very moment that the angels were thrust out of Heaven. Many of the angels were cast into Hell. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

The fallen angels are not confined to any special place; for they are allowed to wander about the earth tempting man. But they carry their Hell about with them everywhere they go, inasmuch as they suffer the torments of Hell always. At the last day the evil spirits will be judged and their wickedness and its punishment will be made known or revealed to the whole world (St. Jude vi; II Pet. ii, 4).

c) Dear children, God's punishments are terrible. We see this from the fate of the fallen angels. At one time they were unspeakably happy—now they are unutterably miserable; at one time they shone like the sun—now they are ugly and repulsive; at one time they were good and holy—now they are disgusting and horrible to behold in their wickedness; at one time they were filled to overflowing with joy and gladness in Heaven—now they are sad unto death and in despair in the flames of Hell. O what a change! Therefore they cherish bitter anger against God. If they could, they would cast God Himself out of Heaven. But since they are helpless and like weak children in His sight, they curse and blaspheme Him unceasing-

ly. They are confirmed in wickedness and hardened in their sins. They can no longer repent of their sins; and therefore God can no longer pardon them. They will remain forever in sin and therefore they will remain forever in Hell. They lie and say false things about God and man. Therefore they are called "devils," for the word devil means "slanderer." What then are they called?—**They are called devils or bad angels.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

The angels can do nothing against God; therefore they let out their anger and envy on the men of this world. They foster a detestable anger and jealousy against all of us. They cannot bear to see that we are God's children and that one day we are even to become God's children in Heaven. What do they do therefore?

1. As the hunter pursues game, so the devils pursue us. They are always trying to harm us in body and soul. Holy Scripture gives us many examples of these persecutions by the Evil One. The misfortune that befell Job (I and II Chap.) came from the devil. Job was always a good and pious man, and therefore the devil hated him. The wicked spirit begged God to allow him to strike Job with all sorts of misfortunes. God granted permission to the devil, in order to increase the merits of this faithful servant, Job. The devil can do nothing to harm us, unless God permits it. Consequently Job lost all of his earthly possessions. His animals died; his house burned to the ground; he himself was covered with a dreadful disease from head to foot; his sons and daughters died. You see, therefore, *how the devil can harm us in our temporal possessions,* in health and life, in body, if God permits it.

Yes, God sometimes even permits that the bodies of men, who have given themselves over to a wicked life, be possessed by the evil spirits, as a town is occupied by a general who has conquered it. In the days of Our Blessed Saviour there were many persons thus possessed, and consequently they were struck dumb (Mat.

ix, 32), or blind (Mat. xii, 22) or made exceedingly fierce (Mat. viii, 28). God allowed that there should be many such persons possessed by the devils, in order that He might show the almighty power of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and at the same time the weakness of the devils in the presence of God. Jesus then drove the evil spirits from the persons possessed. Of course not all who were possessed by the devil were necessarily in this sad state through their own fault. Some children even were possessed by the devil from their birth (Mark ix, 20). Yes, at times God even allowed holy men and women and children to be possessed by the wicked spirits for a time; but more often it was a punishment for some grievous sin, especially for deliberate friendship with the devil. Such cases are not unfrequent even now in pagan countries, as Catholic missionaries have informed us.

God also permits the evil spirits to mislead persons, who practice what is called Spiritism *(write the word on the blackboard)*. This consists in calling on the spirits of the dead, in order to discover things hidden, or things that take place at a distance. The devils make believe that they are the spirits of the dead, and by their superior knowledge they are often able to reveal many things, by which they deceive those who have recourse to them. Sometimes on such occasions the evil spirits take on a material form, so that it is possible to photograph them. Dear children, Spiritism leads to a loss of Faith and of morals, or at least to the ruin of the mind of the persons, who practise it. *(Show the children a copy of Godfrey J. Raupert's* "Modern Spiritism," or "The Dangers of Spiritism," or "Christ and the Powers of Darkness," published by B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo.) The devil's great purpose is to ruin the Church, which he knows is the means instituted by Christ to destroy his power on earth. No wonder, then, that the Church warns us against Spiritism.

2. The devils also try *to harm us as regards our soul.*

It is remarkable to note how slyly they attack us. Just think of the temptation of our first parents! The devil tries to find out what is our pet sin, and that is the sin, which he tries to make us commit. The evil spirits want us to be condemned to the same place of torments, where they suffer night and day. So great is their hate and envy! What wicked spirits the devils really are! Yet the devil cannot do real harm to anyone who keeps the Commandments of God and avoids sin. The dog that is tied up cannot do any harm to those who keep out of range of his chain. The devil is like this dog. He can work on our memory and on our imagination, but he has no power over our will or our understanding. He can persuade us to commit evil, but he cannot compel or force us to do wrong against our will.

Dear children, if a wild beast were to attack you what would you do?—Would you not shout out loud for help and would you not defend yourself for all your worth?—Satan is like a wild beast; he attacks you and tries to destroy you. What then should you do?—Cry out to God for help—pray: resist manfully all temptations. St. James says: "Resist the devil and he will fly from you" (iv, 7). Turn your thoughts to other things immediately, and do not allow yourselves to be disturbed by his wicked suggestions. He who permits himself to dwell on evil thoughts, draws near the dog that is chained, and is almost sure to be bitten by him. Pray, therefore, with all your heart; resist manfully and direct your thoughts to other things: you will surely win the struggle. The devil also fears Holy Water. Use that each night before retiring.

Write on the blackboard:

1. The angels—created good and happy.
2. Many angels—were cast into Hell—the devils.

Synthesis. Let us review briefly what we have just learned. Were the angels good and happy when God created them? What special gifts did they possess?

Did all of them remain good and happy? Who was the leader of the wicked angels? What punishment did God inflict upon the wicked spirits? What do we call the wicked spirits? What does the word "devil" mean? Do they try to harm us? Can they harm us without God's permission? How can we resist the temptation of the devil? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. How beautiful and glorious were not the angels before they committed sin! They were more lovely than the most beautiful things of this world. How happy and joyful they were before they offended Almighty God! Indeed they were far happier than the happiest man could even dream of becoming. And now they are unspeakably sad, and the greatest earthly sorrow is real joy, when compared with what they have to endure. Oh! what has caused this awful change?—A single mortal sin! My God! what an awful thing mortal sin is. Dear children, fear mortal sin with all your hearts. You all have received many blessings from God, especially sanctifying grace. If you preserve grace carefully in your souls, and avoid sin; if you obey God promptly, you too will be like the angels of God. God will love you and reward you one day in Heaven. But if you sin grievously, you are ungrateful and wicked like the angels, and you will be condemned to Hell, where the devils suffer in awful agony. O! just think of these things when you are tempted to sin, and say in your heart: "No! I do not want to become like the devils: I wish to remain an angel of God."

2. The devils try to lead us into sin.—Once there was a certain king, who wished to try the spirit of his son, a young prince. The father placed two tables before his son. On one of these he laid a scepter and a crown; on the other table he placed a sword and an iron helmet. He then told the prince to select whichever gift he wanted to have. The young prince did

not consider long. He reached for the sword and the helmet. And when the father asked him why he made that selection, he pointed from the table, on which the sword and the helmet lay, to the table, where the scepter and the crown were, saying: "By means of these I can obtain those!"—Yes, dear children, through battle to victory! It is only by means of trials and temptations and sufferings, that we can obtain the scepter and the crown of heavenly glory. Have you a desire to possess the happiness of Heaven?—Well, then, do not fear the temptations and sufferings of this earthly life. By means of these you can obtain the bright crown of Heaven. Temptations coming from the world, the flesh and the devil are necessary for us, if we wish to gain Heaven. Fight, therefore, bravely day after day for God and for Heaven.

3. Let us now call upon the great angel, Michael, to assist us in this great struggle, and renew that prayer every day, especially when temptations come. "St. Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protector against the malice and the snares of the devil. Rebuke him, O God, we humbly beseech Thee. And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the divine power thrust into Hell Satan and all the wicked spirits, who roam about the world, seeking the destruction of souls. Amen."

LESSON XII.

Man—God's Image and Likeness.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which are the chief creatures of God? L. IV, Q. 34.
2) What is man? L. I, Q. 3.
3) Is this likeness in the body or in the soul? L. I, Q. 4.
4) How is the soul like to God? L. I, Q. 5.

5) Who were the first man and woman? L. V, Q. 39.

6) Were Adam and Eve innocent and holy, when they came forth from the hand of God? L. IV, Q. 40.

Preparation. Dear children, the angels are God's image and likeness. They are pure spirits without a body like God Himself—the natural image of God. They are also filled with grace and holiness—the supernatural image of God. Let us review the preceding lesson. *(Question on the foregoing lesson).*— Man, too, is the image and likeness of God, although to be sure he is not as beautiful and perfect as the angels of God. St. Gregory says: "Man is a little world; for when God created an invisible world, a world of spirits, the holy angels, and a visible or a material world, namely all that we see round about us, He wished to unite both of these worlds into a third world. And this world is man. For man is spiritual like the angels, and material like the world in which he lives. He unites in himself the spiritual and the material creation."

Aim. Today I am going to speak to you of man; I intend to teach you how God made man according to His own image and likeness.

Presentation. In the beginning God arranged the whole world in a very beautiful and wise and wonderful manner. Everywhere the bushes and the flowers sprouted forth and bloomed. The trees grew and bore precious fruits. In the waters the fishes sported and played. The birds sang their joyful songs beneath the blue dome of heaven. The fields and the meadows and the woods were alive with countless animals rejoicing in the fullness of life and freedom. But as yet, there was no one to behold the wonders of God's beautiful Nature; no one to enjoy this marvelous sight. The lord of creation—man—was still missing. Then the three Divine Persons entered into counsel with one another. God, the Father, said: "Let us now make

man according to our own image and likeness! He shall have dominion over the fishes of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and over the whole earth." And God created man after His own image and likeness. He formed and fashioned a body out of the slime of the earth and breathed the breath of life into his face. Thus man became a living soul. And God called him Adam. Then causing a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, God took out one of Adam's ribs, filling its place with flesh: and the Lord built the rib, which He had taken from Adam, into a woman, Eve. And He brought her to Adam. You all know the story very well. Let us now consider this masterpiece of God a little more in detail.

Explanation. 1. When the Lord created the animals, He did not say: "Let us make the fishes, and the birds, and all other animals!" No. But when He created man, He said: "Let us now make man!" This shows plainly that man must be more excellent, a much nobler creature, than all the animals and all the other creatures of the visible creation. Yes, God created the world for man; for He created man last of all, and He put him in possession of the earth, which He had made. "Let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping thing that moveth on the earth" (Gen. i, 26)—that is what God said. God made everything to be man's, to be for man's use and for his food. Man is next to the angels in dignity and excellence. Holy Scripture tells us this same truth, for in the eighth Psalm (v. 6, 7) we read the words of the Holy Spirit of God: "Thou (God) hast made him (man) a little lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor; Thou hast set him over the works of Thy hands." **The chief creatures of God are angels and men.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. a) You know how God made the first man. He

formed and fashioned a body out of the slime or dust of the earth. He made a head, hands, feet, mouth, eyes, ears, etc.—everything that belongs to the body of man. There he lay on the ground, cold, stiff, dirty, just like a large statue without life, sight, hearing, motion. Then Almighty God did something to the first man that He did not do to any other creature. He breathed into the face of this lifeless body, which He had formed out of the dust. What does this mean?—When a person breathes it is air, which he takes into his lungs. But when God breathes, it is not air, but spirit. God breathed a spirit into the form and figure of the first man. That spirit is an immortal soul. Immediately that body, that lay without motion upon the ground, opened its eyes and ears; it stood up and looked about and walked. Thus the first man, complete and perfect in body and soul, came forth from the hand of Almighty God. Thereupon the Lord made the first woman by taking a rib from the side of the first man, while he was sound asleep. God formed and fashioned it into a body and breathed into that lifeless body the breath of life, a spirit, an immortal soul. What then is man? **Man is a creature composed of body and soul.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

You see, therefore, that man did not always exist. There was a time, when there were no men. How then did man begin to be?—Unbelievers tell us, that man came from other creatures, especially from the monkeys. In the course of time, they tell us, monkeys developed in such a manner, that they turned into men. Therefore man did not come from God, but man came from the monkeys. How foolish! Anyone can assert; but to prove what one asserts is quite another thing. These unbelievers, who hate God, cannot show that what they assert is true simply because they assert a falsehood, a lie. You might just as well say: "Man fell from the moon." Moreover, why do not monkeys now become men? No, God Himself formed man's body out of the dust of the earth and

breathed a soul into man's body. The soul is to return to God, who made it; but the body is to return to the earth, whence it was taken. When a corpse, therefore, is buried, the priest says: "Receive, O earth, what is thine; receive, O God, what is Thine." Every year on Ash Wednesday the priest in the name of the Church strews blessed ashes on the forehead of Catholics, saying: "Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return."

b) When an artist or a sculptor wishes to paint a picture or to carve a statue, he first forms a picture in his mind; only then does he paint or chisel. So too, God, the Father, first looked at Himself, and then He said solemnly: "Let us make man according to our image and likeness." The first man was God's image and likeness. Every man is in like manner an image of God: every man looks like God. **Man is a creature made to the image and likeness of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Now how is man made to the image and likeness of God?—Man is like to God not indeed as regards his body; for God has no body. God is a spirit. Man is like to God in his soul. The soul of man looks like God—is God's image and likeness. **This likeness is chiefly in the soul.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Remember, dear children, that we did not say: Man is made *equal* to God, but rather man is made *like* to God. For God is the Creator and man is only a creature of God. Man has a soul, which reflects God's image and likeness as a mirror reflects the object placed before it.

4. Let us now try to understand *how* man's soul is made unto the image and likeness of God.

a) After God had completed Adam's body, He breathed the breath of life into that body and Adam became a living soul. What does this mean?—Is the soul a breath of air or of the mouth?—No, it is the breath of God; therefore it is not breath such as comes

from our mouths or stirs in the air round about us. God has no mouth. What then do those words mean: "God breathed into Adam's face the breath of life?" —They mean, that the soul is not anything visible, not anything, that we can see and touch like the body, but rather something invisible, something spiritual, like God Himself, who has made it. God is a Spirit. The soul, too, is a spirit. **The soul is like to God because it is** a spirit. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) The soul is not of this earth; it is God's breath. It is a spirit like God Himself. Now God is immortal. The soul, too, is immortal, that is, will never die; can never be destroyed. Jesus Himself has told us this truth. He says: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul" (Mat. x, 28). When the Saviour was transfigured on Mt. Thabor there appeared with Him Moses and Elias. Both of these Prophets had been dead for hundreds of years. And yet, they continued to live on in the other life beyond the grave. On the occasion of Jesus' death on the cross many dead arose from their graves and walked about the streets of Jerusalem. Their souls were not dead. You see, therefore, that the soul is like to God, because it will never die. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* O, how glorious is not our soul! Everything round about us will die: the soul alone will live forever like God Himself. How we ought to thank God for this great gift!

c) Does the body think?—No, the body does not think. Only the soul thinks and understands. When you read, the eye sees only the letters, but the soul thinks at the same time. Men have thought out great things with their understanding or reason. They have invented great things, for instance, the steam engine, that works with the strength of a giant; the telegraph, by means of which man can talk with distant Europe in a very short time; the wireless telegraph, by means of which man can speak to other men, who are living many hundreds of miles away, without even using

wires to carry the sound. Man can do these wonderful things, because he has understanding or reason. And the understanding or reason is not the body, but the soul. God, too, has understanding or reason: He is all-wise. He has understanding, an infinitely great, mighty, almighty understanding, that comprehends all times and all peoples, that looks into the depths of the deep. Even though our understanding as compared with the understanding of God is weak and limited, still it is understanding and we can think with our soul. The soul is like to God, because **the soul has understanding.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard*).

d) A good child says: "I will obey: I will go to Mass on Sundays: I will not commit sin any more." A wicked child says: "I will not obey: I do not wish to pray." The good thief next to Christ on the cross was converted at the very last moment, and prayed: "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!" The wicked thief on the left of Jesus thought to himself: "I do not want to be converted. As I have lived, so I will die!" Both of these men had a free-will. All the saints of God had an iron will for good and a strong will against evil. They preferred to die rather than to offend God by sin. Dear children, you too, all men have a free-will. You can choose between good and evil, between Heaven and Hell. Now God, too, has a free-will. He willed: therefore the world was made He said: "Let it be made!" that is, "I will: Let all be made!" He said to the leper: "I will, be thou made clean!" You see, therefore, the soul is like to God, because **the soul has free-will.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Therefore, the soul is the image and likeness of God. The soul is a spirit, will never die, has understanding and free-will. God is a Spirit, will never die, has understanding and free-will. All these things belong to the nature of the soul of every man. Therefore we say: **The soul is the natural image and likeness of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Remember,

however, dear children, that the soul is only like to God, not equal to Him. For God is a Spirit infinitely perfect: He is not only immortal, He is eternal, for He had no beginning, always was and always will be: God is infinitely wise, for He knows all things: He is omnipotent, for He wills and everything is made. God is like the mighty sun—our soul is like a weak little candle light. But we are, for all that, made to the image and likeness of the great God. O, what a great dignity is ours!

5. After the Lord had created the first man, He called him "Adam," which is a Hebrew word meaning "earth," because Adam was made from the dust or slime of the earth. When Adam awoke from his deep sleep, God led the first woman to Adam and married them to each other. Adam rejoiced when he saw this helpmate and partner. He called her "Eve," which is a Hebrew word meaning "mother of all the living." **The first man and woman were Adam and Eve.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Dear children, all men form one great family, whose father is Adam and whose mother is Eve. Adam and Eve are our first parents, because all men descend or come from them just as the branches of a tree come from the one and the same trunk. But are there not men of white, black, red, brown and yellow color? How then can all these come from the same parents?—The differences in the color of the skin are due to the differences of climate, food and manner of living. We find that animals living under a different climate gradually change their shape and color. All men have certain common qualities of body, and also the same common powers of soul: memory, understanding and free-will. Therefore Holy Scripture (Acts of Ap. xvii, 26) says: "He (God) hath made all mankind to dwell upon the whole face of the earth."

All men derive only their bodies from Adam and Eve. The soul of every man is created immediately by God. Just as the Holy Spirit in Baptism, and in the

Sacrament of Penance, descends into the soul of man and gives it spiritual life, so God gives natural life to the body of man by placing a soul in it. God creates each soul and at the same moment places it in the body, which has been prepared for it.

6. God gave natural gifts to our first parents. But He was not satisfied with this goodness. He bestowed certain other presents upon Adam and Eve, which are infinitely more valuable than the glorious gifts we have just been considering. Dear children, just think of the little dew drop that hangs on the blade of grass on a beautiful morning in the spring time. How it glitters and sparkles and flashes in the bright sunlight, more gloriously than the most precious jewel! There is some of the beauty of the morning sun in that little dew drop; the splendor of the sun is reflected there. So too, there was something of the beauty and holiness of God Himself in the soul of Adam and Eve, when God created them according to His image and likeness. Adam's soul was innocent and holy! It was full of grace. This grace made his soul holy; sanctified his soul in God's sight. Therefore this grace is called sanctifying grace. When God looked at that soul and saw in it as in a mirror His own image and likeness, He was pleased. Nay more: because man was holy, God accepted him as His child. What a great honor to be God's child! What is a king's child when compared with a child of the King of kings, God Almighty? Moreover, because Adam was a child of God, he had a right to what His heavenly Father possesses—he was an heir to Heaven. What is an earthly kingdom when compared to the glorious kingdom of Heaven? All these wonderful things came from sanctifying grace. Therefore, grace was the greatest gift of God to man, and that grace made our first parents equal to the angels of God. Our Catechism says: **Adam and Eve were innocent and holy, when they came from the hand of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

How wealthy and glorious were not our first parents

in Paradise! And yet, God was not satisfied with these many gifts. He wanted to bestow even more presents upon Adam and Eve. He gave them a *clear understanding and great knowledge.* Adam possessed wonderful talents of mind. To learn was easy for him; yes, as easy as playing is for children. Therefore Adam could call all the animals at once by their right names. Adam also had a *holy will.* Whatever God wants, Adam wanted too; whatever pleases God, pleased Adam too; for Adam was a saint. He did not know anything of evil. The devil had first to teach him what was wrong. Moreover, Adam had *heaven on earth.* He was allowed to live in the Garden of Paradise. There were no sufferings or sorrows there, only joy and happiness the livelong day. There was no fear of death to spoil Adam's happiness, for his *body was immortal.* He was to pass, after a long and happy life, with body and soul from earth to his home in Heaven with God. He was never to die. *(Write all these gifts on the blackboard; see diagram below).*

Dear children, all these gifts: sanctifying grace, a clear understanding and wonderful knowledge, an immortal body, a holy will, heaven on earth, were supernatural gifts. *Adam and Eve* were not only a natural image of God; they *were also a supernatural image and likeness of God. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Chief creatures of God—angels and men.
2. Man { made to Gods' image and likeness. / creature composed of body and soul
3. God's image—chiefly in the soul.
4. Soul { has understanding and free will. / spirit—will never die
5. First man and woman—Adam and Eve.

6. *Natural Image* the soul	*Supernatural Image.*
a) a spirit	a) full of grace—a child of God—an heir to Heaven.
b) understanding	b) clear understanding—great knowledge.
c) free-will	c) good and holy will; no evil inclination.
d) immortal	d) free from every evil—immortal even in body.

Synthesis. God has done great things indeed for the first man and woman. He made them according to His own image and likeness. Man is the chief creature of God on earth. Who are the other chief creatures of God? How did God make the first man? the first woman? What is man? According to whose image did God create the first man? Where is the image and likeness to God to be found in man? How is the soul like to God? What natural gifts did God give to man? Who were the first man and woman? What does the word "Adam" mean? the word "Eve"? What other gifts did God bestow upon our first parents? Name all the supernatural gifts bestowed upon our first parents? Where did Adam and Eve live? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. God formed the animals from the earth. He also formed the body of the first man from the dust of the earth. But what is it that makes man more excellent than the animals?—The very figure and form of man is nobler and more beautiful than the form of the animals. But man has an immortal soul. —This it is that raises him infinitely above all the animals. And yet, there are learned men, who say: Man is only a higher animal. Did you ever hear an animal speak? An animal cannot speak, because it cannot think. Many animals are very docile, for instance the dog. But just place a book before a dog

and try to teach him to read. He will look at the letters; he sees them just as you see them. But he does not think. And if you tell him: This letter is a or b, he cannot learn it, because he has no understanding. At most he will wag his tail, because you are fooling with him. Or hold a piece of meat before a dog that is hungry. Do you imagine that he thinks to himself: Now, I do not wish to eat? No, if he is hungry, he will surely eat the meat. He has no free-will; he must do what his nature urges him to do. But you must not eat; you can eat whenever you will. You have a free-will. Man is a creature composed of body and soul having understanding and free-will.

2. The soul of man is an immortal spirit. But sometimes one hears people say: With death everything is ended! What do you say to that?—Not even the heathens or pagans are as wicked as that; for they believe that the soul, after it leaves the body, will continue to live in another life. "Death ends all!"—thus only those people talk, who live in serious sin and are terribly frightened of eternal death in Hell. No, all does not end with death. For after death, the real, true life begins. The body is indeed placed in the grave, but the soul enters into eternal life.

3. You have an immortal soul. The soul is God's image and likeness.—That is indeed a great honor and dignity! God Himself is your Father. Act then according to this great dignity and bring true honor to your Father by your life and deeds. Your soul has infinite value. Place your soul on one side of a scale and the whole world on the other—your soul outweighs all else. Now you can understand why Jesus shed His Precious Blood to save your souls. Dear children, do not soil God's image in your souls by sin.

LESSON XIII.

The Sin of Our First Parents.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which are the chief blessings intended for Adam and Eve had they remained faithful to God? L. V, Q. 42

2) Did God give any command to Adam and Eve? L. V, Q. 41.

3) Did Adam and Eve remain faithful to God? L. V, Q. 43.

4) What befell Adam and Eve on account of their sin? L. V, Q. 44.

Preparation. Dear children, God favored the first man and woman most highly. He bestowed many natural and supernatural gifts upon them. Let us review this teaching concerning the gifts of our first parents. *(Question the children briefly on the preceding lesson.)* N. N. suppose I gave you an apple and you ate it—would it harm you or any one else? No, it would not. But if your mother had forbidden you to eat apples, what then? Why, if you ate the apple, it would grieve her, would it not? Moreover, the apple would have a bad aftertaste for you, would it not? It is a forbidden fruit. Or if you had taken the apple away from some one else—could you eat it quietly, or would you not become disturbed and a voice within you say: You are doing wrong? Let us take another case. N. N. suppose you had brought an apple with you to school and you were about to take a bite, when you noticed two hungry, pleading eyes. It is one of your schoolmates. Now if you, nevertheless, were to bite into the apple, instead of sharing it with him, that apple would no longer taste the same as it would for example to a monkey. You would feel a secret something within you, that would condemn your eating the apple. Perhaps you would even feel a certain shame after having eaten it. Yes, man cannot do whatever he wants. It is as though there were two men within

us, one, who wishes to give in to every appetite and desire, and another man, who thinks of other men and of love and of friendship. The animal, too, has a feeling of disquiet and fear, when it has eaten something that is forbidden; but it is only the memory of punishment and fear for having done that. But with man there is a voice within his heart, that condemns him, even though no one else says or does anything. That is the wonderful thing that distinguishes us from the animals.

Now you yourselves must surely have felt that; therefore I am going to ask you something further. Suppose you had received a big plate of apples at Christmas and you had eaten half of them that same evening. Can you do that with a good conscience? It does not harm anyone. Your brothers and sisters have received their own portions. And the apples are yours. Now, tell me, would you not in spite of all feel a certain shame, if you were to devour so many at once? Would you not be ashamed of your greediness? There is within you a man, who does not wish greediness and who wants to fight against it, because he knows what evil these wild, unconquered inclinations produce in life. It is as though one were playing with fire, if one gives in to these inclinations.

You see, therefore, there are for us two different kinds of apples: those that one may eat, and those that one may not eat, because a voice within us forbids us and this voice forbids us, whenever we would thereby harm another, or refuse a request, or thereby nourish desires and inclinations, which could harm others. Three or four apples are not forbidden on Christmas; but the inner voice begins to murmur against the fifth apple. It forbids the sixth, even though the whole world were to allow it. After you have swallowed it you feel at once what is good and what is bad. You experience the difference plainly between the first and the sixth apple. Yes, it is as though this last apple is from an entirely different tree from the others—from

a tree, of which you may not eat. And if, nevertheless, you eat of that tree, you at once know from your own heart, what is good and what is evil. "You have eaten from the tree of knowledge."

Now that is just what our first parents did in the Garden of Paradise. They ate of the forbidden fruit—they ate of the tree of knowledge.

Aim. Today I am going to speak to you of the sin of our first parents in Paradise.

Presentation. In the beginning the Lord God planted a lovely garden, where most beautiful trees grew, bearing the sweetest blossoms and the most delicious fruits. Flowers of all sorts abounded there. This delightful garden was called Paradise or Eden. From the midst of this garden flowed a sparkling spring, which divided itself into four streams and watered the whole garden. Into this pleasant abode God introduced Adam and Eve, and gave it to them to cultivate. The work was not difficult or painful to Adam. It was a pleasure, a joy, and a satisfaction to cultivate the soil. Labour was a delightful recreation to Adam. Moreover, in this lovely garden there was everything that could delight the eyes and charm the senses. Everything grand and beautiful in the world was found in Paradise—a smiling sky over it, pleasant hills and dales, charming scenery and lovely views, trees of every kind charged with delicious fruits and loaded with sweet perfume. There was no sun to scorch nor was there any winter cold to chill. All the pleasures of the four seasons were experienced at one and the same time.

In the midst of all this glory and beauty Adam and Eve ruled like a king and a queen. They far surpassed everything about them in loveliness. Their bodies were beautifully formed—their souls were even more lovely as they shone in the pure white garment of sanctifying grace. They were subject neither to pain nor to sorrow of any kind. Sickness could not come near them, for they enjoyed perfect health of mind and body. They were adorned with every kind of knowledge that a man

is capable of. No passion troubled the quiet of their souls or the peace of their hearts. All their desires were upright and holy and good. Their body obeyed the soul, and the soul obeyed God. They loved God with a most tender love—and God loved them in turn. He talked to them as a father talks to his dear children. All visible creation obeyed them. The birds hovered around them and gladdened their hearts with their sweet melody. Dear to their Creator, their hearts were warm with gratitude and love. After a few years of service they were to be taken, body and soul, into Heaven. All these beautiful things God meant for Adam and Eve and for all their children.

But God wished to try them. They were, like the angels, to earn Heaven by obedience to God. Therefore the Lord said to them: "Of all the trees of the garden you may eat, only of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you may not eat. For on the day that you eat thereof, you will die the death." Consequently Adam and Eve were to avoid this tree, that stood in the midst of the garden.

But alas! they did not obey the dear Lord. Being gifted with a free-will, they could obey or disobey. They obeyed for a time. Unhappily, however, for them and for us they forgot all the favors the Lord had conferred on them. The devil, jealous of them and wishing to bring them into Hell, went into a serpent and got on the forbidden tree. When he saw Eve going about Paradise, he called out to her: "Why did God forbid you to eat of the fruit of these trees"? Eve was not frightened when she saw the serpent, for the serpents then did no harm. She ought to have gone away immediately; but she came near and said: "God did not forbid us to eat of the fruit of the trees, except of this one, lest we should die." The devil, the father of lies, then said: "O! do not fear; eat of the fruit of this tree, and you will not die, but you will know as much as God Himself, the difference between good and evil." Eve was deceived by these words. She looked up and

saw the fruits of the tree. They were so fine, so tempting, and wishing to know as much as God, she took some of the fruit and ate it and gave some to Adam. He, too, ate it in order to please her. They disobeyed God's command—they sinned grievously.

At once they lost sanctifying grace. They were no longer children of God, but sons of Satan. An angel came from Heaven with a sword of fire and drove them out of Paradise. Alas! what dreadful punishments followed upon them. They now had to work hard for a living. God cursed the earth on account of their sin, so that it would produce only briars and thorns and weeds, and they had to work hard to make it produce things. Adam and Eve were subject to pain, sickness and finally death laid its cold hand on them and their bodies returned into dust.

Explanation. 1. O! how happy the first man and woman must have been, when God placed them in the garden of Paradise. Their bodies were formed and fashioned most beautifully and perfectly. Their souls were infinitely more lovely by reason of the rare gifts by which the Lord had endowed them. How bright and quick to learn; how strong their wills were for good; how their hearts were filled with joy of every kind; how healthy and strong their bodies. Sickness and suffering and pain and death and every evil stood outside the garden gates—they could not enter. God talked in a familiar way to Adam and Eve as a father talks to his dear children. "Be obedient to Me," He said, "and love Me; and all these things will be yours day after day. After a short time I will take you both and all your children with Me into Heaven, where you will be happy forever with the angels." How good God is! **The chief blessings intended for Adam and Eve, had they remained faithful to God, were a constant state of happiness in this life and everlasting glory in the next.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)*

2. God, the kind Creator of our first parents, wished

to make them happy for time and eternity. But at the same time He wanted to make them feel, that He was their Lord and Master; that they were dependent upon Him and therefore must obey Him. Adam and Eve were commanded not to eat of the fruit of the tree "of knowledge of good and evil," that stood in the midst of the garden, in order that they might learn what it meant to obey God, and not to think that everything in the garden was theirs, instead of being the gift of their kind and loving Creator. Therefore our Catechism says: **To try their obedience God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of a certain fruit which grew in the garden of Paradise.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Dear children, this was *a just command* and our first parents could find no fault with it. Moreover, it was *easy* to comply with it. God, in laying this commandment on them, wished to show them that, although they were lords and masters of the visible creation, still they had no right over created things, unless God had given this right. Consequently by this command of not eating of the forbidden fruit God wanted to let them know that they were altogether dependent upon Him and so should obey Him. Thus by their obedience and fidelity Adam and Eve could merit a continuation of God's favors here and eternal happiness hereafter.

3. Adam and Eve remained faithful to God's command for a time. The devil, however, was watching them closely. He was jealous because they were so happy. He could not bear to see two creatures, that were taken from the slime of the earth, so blessed in everything, whilst he, who was formerly an inhabitant of Heaven, was now cast down into Hell in misery and disgrace. So he decided to try to lead them into sin. You know how he went about it. He entered into a serpent, that twisted itself about the tree; yes, about the very tree that our first parents were to have nothing to do with. When he saw Eve approach, he began

to tell all sorts of lies. "Why did God command, that you should not eat of every tree in the garden"? Eve allowed herself to be drawn into conversation with the tempter. "It is not true that you will die," he said to Eve's answer. "Eat and your eyes will be opened, and you will be as gods, knowing good and evil." The devil is a liar from the beginning and the father of liars. Eve could indeed know that all that the devil was saying was untrue; for at the same time she and Adam had great knowledge and understanding. But no; she let herself be deceived and slowly but surely she began to commit sin. She looked up at the tree. "How beautiful the apples! How they shine and sparkle! They must be very juicy. The other apples are not like them. Really, it cannot be so bad, after all, if I take one." She reached up, took one and ate it. Then she called out: "Adam, Adam; how good these apples are! How juicy and sweet!" Adam's mouth began to water when he saw Eve enjoying the apple. He is about to stretch forth his hand. "Stop! You may not do that," his conscience calls out; "that is the forbidden fruit." Then Eve came again and said: "O, that does not matter. In all the garden there is no tree like this one." Adam took an apple and ate it.

The act was done. Immediately all was lost—grace, the wonderful knowledge and understanding, the good will, Paradise, everything, everything! There was only one that had his hellish joy—that was the devil hiding behind the leaves of the tree of knowledge. How he had been watching and spying! He has won the victory. Adam, Adam, what have you done?—The first great sin was committed. **Adam and Eve did not remain faithful to God, but broke His command by eating the forbidden fruit.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

The sin of our first parents was a serious, *grievous sin,* because the Lord had given a serious command concerning a serious matter, and yet, Adam and Eve with full knowledge and consent disobeyed that com-

mand. It was not a question merely of an apple, but of grace and gifts, which God had bestowed on them. "If you eat the apple, you will lose My grace and the gifts I have bestowed upon you"—that is what God had said. "If you do not eat the apple, you will retain all of these wonderful gifts for yourselves and for all your children"—that is what God had said. Surely this is a very serious matter. Moreover, Adam and Eve knew that the serpent had lied, because God had said: "If you eat, you will surely die!" Nevertheless, they did not believe God. Our first parents thought that they knew better than God; they believed the serpent. What a grievous insult to God!

4. a) Adam and Eve had no sooner disobeyed God's command by eating of the forbidden fruit, than their eyes were opened to the wretched state into which they had fallen. They soon found to their sorrow, what a wicked thing they had done. The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil gave them light only to see their sad and miserable plight. Before their sin they were filled with God's grace, which made them innocent and holy. Their souls were wonderfully beautiful, for grace is like a spark of the beauty and holiness of God Himself. After their sin they fell into disgrace before God. Before their sin they were God's children and heirs to Heaven. After their sin they became children of Satan and heirs to Hell. Adam and Eve must have wept night and day over the great loss they suffered by their sin! But their sorrow came too late. They themselves had foolishly wasted their grace and their gifts. **Adam and Eve, on account of their sin, lost innocence and holiness.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Guilt causes *shame.* Adam and Eve after their sin blushed at what they had not observed before. While they were innocent and holy, they had not noticed that they were naked, neither did they blush. But after they committed sin, they made a covering for themselves from the leaves of the trees. Grace had cov-

ered their souls and their bodies, too, so that they did not need to wear clothing. However, they had lost grace, this heavenly gift; therefore now they blushed at what they had not observed before. Their peace of mind was disturbed. The garden appeared changed to them from what it had been. Oh! what would they not give now, if only they could undo the evil deed. They heard the voice of God in the garden. It was no longer the voice of gladness; it was a sound of terror to their ears. They ran off, trembling with *fear* and hid themselves in the thicket of the trees and bushes. What cowards sin makes of us! But God called out: "Adam, Adam, where art thou?" Adam replied: "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." A few moments before they were innocent and holy, children of God and heirs to Heaven, peaceful and happy—now they are in disgrace, children of Satan and heirs of Hell, in shame and fear and sorrow. What a dreadful thing sin is in God's sight!

b) That was not all the misery that came upon our first parents for their disobedience. Before their sin, they were filled with great knowledge and understanding—after their sin, their minds became darkened, as though a heavy fog had settled over them. How hard it is to see far in a fog or a mist! So, too, Adam and Eve lost the brightness of their minds and of their understanding. Before their sin, they were blessed with a good will. They found it easy to do good. After their sin, their will became wicked and was continually inclining them to do wrong. Before their sin, they were free from every evil; their life was filled with joy and happiness; their bodies were strong and healthy and were never to die. After their sin, they were filled with all sorts of evils. The Lord God sent them out of the garden. Paradise was no longer to be theirs. A Cherub, with a flaming sword, was placed at the entrance to prevent their returning into it. A life of sorrow, suffering, sickness and trouble

of every kind waited for them outside the gate of the garden. Now they had to work hard at tilling the soil, so that the sweat poured from their foreheads. But the saddest of all the troubles was death, whose cold hand was now stretched forth against them. These were the evils to which our first parents were condemned or doomed for their sin. They wept and lamented in vain. It was too late to change. **Adam and Eve, on account of their sin, were doomed to sickness and death.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Write on the blackboard:

1. *Blessings:*

   Constant happiness in this life;
   Everlasting glory in the next.

2. *Trial:*

   Forbidden fruit.

3. *Fall:*

   Disobeyed God's command.

4. *Punishment:*

   Lost innocence and holiness (grace);
   Were doomed to sickness and death.

(N. B. This last answer may be more fully developed thus:

Adam and Eve:	
Before their sin	After their sin
1) full of grace—children of God; heirs to Heaven;	1) in disgrace — children of Satan; heirs to Hell;
2) full of understanding and good will;	2) full of ignorance and bad will;
3) free from every evil and immortal even in body.	3) filled with every evil and subject to death.

Synthesis. God really meant it well with our first parents. What blessings did He intend to confer upon them? Were they to receive all these blessings for nothing, or did they have to earn them? Did Adam and Eve remain faithful to God? Who tempted them? What did the devil say? What did they lose by their sin? What other punishments befell them? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. Deep was the fall of our first parents and great was their punishment. But deeper still was the fall of the angels and greater by far was their punishment. Let us compare them. What blessings did God bestow on the angels?—What favors did He give to Adam and Eve?—What did the angels lose by their sin?—What did our first parents lose by their disobedience?—But why were not our first parents cast into Hell immediately after their sin?—I do not know. It is due entirely to the mercy and the kindness of God. Let us praise the mercy of God forever.

2. How did it happen that the first man and woman with all their glorious gifts of body and soul fell into sin?—So many a person asks himself without being able to answer the question correctly. And yet, the very same thing happened at the fall of our first parents, that happens to-day in every sin. Adam and Eve did not become wicked all at once. That terrible sin did not happen suddenly and in a moment. They fell away from God only gradually and first in their own hearts before committing the sin of eating of the forbidden fruit. They became more and more careless in their service of God and allowed themselves to become distracted by outward things. Thus little by little they fell into sin. They did not resist the temptation from the very beginning. First they went into the occasion of sin; then they allowed themselves to be led on by the tempter step by step, until finally they fell. Dear children, let us learn from this sad experience of our first parents to avoid the dangers that lead

to sin, namely, temptations. When your conscience warns you that there is danger ahead, be on your guard at once. Turn away from bad companions or books or places; banish every wicked thought as soon as you become aware of it. Call out for God's help. Resist at once. Then the temptation will have no power over you. That is the way to become a saint.

3. How terrible was not the punishment inflicted upon our first parents! They remained the natural image and likeness of God, but sin destroyed the supernatural image and likeness of God in their souls. They were no longer innocent and holy. They were afraid to look at God; they fled away from Him. Satan put chains on them. Their bodies finally turned into dust. "The wages of sin is death," says St. Paul. Dear children, do you now understand, that to serve God is our only true happiness even in this life, and that all who stray away from God by sin will perish miserably? Let us say this prayer together: "O dearest Jesus, help me to keep my heart always free from sin."

LESSON XIV.

Original Sin.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What evil befell us on account of the disobedience of our first parents? L. V, Q. 45.

2) What other effects followed from the sin of our first parents? L. V, Q. 46.

3) What is this sin called, which we inherit from our first parents? L. V, Q. 47.

4) Why is this sin called original sin? L. V, Q. 48.

5) Does this corruption of our nature remain in us after original sin is forgiven? L. V, Q. 49.

Preparation. Dear children, that was indeed a sad state into which our first parents fell by their act of disobedience. All sorts of evils befell them; yes, not

them alone, but also all men who have come into the world after them. Let us first review the preceding lesson. *(Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson.)* There was once a certain king, who had two servants, a man and his wife, who were not blessed with much of this world's goods. The king took a fancy to them and gave them a fine house to live in with many other rich gifts. There was but one command he placed upon them—they were to serve him faithfully. These two persons did indeed serve the king for a while, but at last they turned against him and joined his enemies. This made the king very angry, and he deprived them of all that he had given them and drove them away. Now when these two persons died, do you think that their children inherited that fine house and all those beautiful and rich possessions, which their parents once owned? No, indeed; their parents had lost everything and had, moreover, contracted many debts. Their children inherited only poverty and the debts which their unfortunate parents had left at their death. Besides this, the children of these two former servants of the king were hateful to the king because of the wickedness of their parents. This very same misfortune happened to us because of the disobedience of our first parents to the King of kings, God Almighty.

Aim. To-day I am going to tell you of the evils that happened to us on account of the sin of our first parents.

Presentation. You recall the terrible punishments which Almighty God had imposed upon Adam and Eve after they had allowed the devil to deceive them into disobeying God's command. Deprived of sanctifying grace, they were expelled from the garden of delights. After a life of happiness and joy in holy innocence, what could Adam and Eve now expect?—Only sorrow, pain, labor, sickness, death. What a sad day for them! But that was only the beginning of a much sadder history for all of their children. From that very moment there began that long, long stream of misery and woe

and tears, that has swept over the whole human race and that will continue to rush onward until the end of time. Everywhere we can see the trail of the serpent, the devil, to whom Adam and Eve had sold the human race.

Even in the first human family there was a criminal, Cain, who struck his own brother, Abel, and murdered him. Soon after the number of men increased on the face of the earth; and as they grew in number, they grew also in vice and crime. They no longer troubled themselves about God; all their thoughts and desires were directed towards wickedness. God could bear with them no longer. In His anger He said: "I will destroy them from the face of the earth!" And the awful flood or deluge covered the face of the earth. Only a few men, Noah and his family, were spared. Soon after the flood men increased again in number. And they, too, forgot the one true God and committed horrible crimes. They began to make false gods, or idols, and to adore them and to offer sacrifice to them. Even the chosen people of God, the Israelites, fell into the shameful sin of idolatry. The heathens worshipped even animals as their gods. The people of Egypt adored the crocodile and the cat; but it was particularly the bull (Apis), that received divine honors. The Egyptians built great and magnificent temples in honor of this bull-god. Yes, the heathens even offered sacrifices of human beings to their gods. For instance, history tells us that the heathens of Palestine, the Chanaanites, adored the false god, Moloch. This idol was a great statue of iron in the shape of a man with the head of a bull. They built a great fire in the belly of this idol and while the false god was glowing with heat, the mothers of the Chanaanites would bring their little infants and place them on the outstretched arms of the idol. Gradually these poor little children would fall into the fire and be consumed. Meanwhile the heathens would make a great noise like the devils of Hell, in order that the cries and the moans and the

screams of the little babes might not be heard by them. It is awful; it is enough to make one's blood run cold to think of such horrible crimes.

Many of the pagans committed other terrible sins. They thought that by suicide and other wicked acts they could please their idols. If the children of these heathens became a burden to their parents, they would simply throw these poor little creatures into the water, or expose them in the woods, where they were either eaten by the wild beasts or killed by hunger. On the other hand, grown up children sometimes murdered their parents, when they became old and helpless. Still more pitiable was the condition of the slaves. They were often maltreated worse than the animals of the woods. The heathens thought that there was but one difference between the animals and the slaves; the animals were dumb, but the slaves could talk.

But it is enough. I do not want to describe any more. So deeply did men fall into sin; so grievously did they offend Almighty God; so greatly did the misery and the wretchedness of the human race become after the sin of Adam and Eve, our first parents!

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, these are terrible things that I have just related to you. But who is the cause of all this misery?—Adam and Eve, our first parents, are to blame for all these misfortunes. How did God punish them for their sin?—He drove them out of the garden of pleasures; from henceforth they had to earn their living in the sweat of their brows. They were subject to sickness and to all sorts of pains and finally to death. Their understanding was darkened; their will became weakened and they found it hard to do the right thing. Their passions and evil inclinations were constantly leading them to commit sin. Now all of these evils passed on to their children and to every man born into the world after them. Just think of all the miseries and the sufferings and the sorrows, that have afflicted the world since the days of Adam and Eve. You and I and all men feel these

evils, too; we all suffer these same punishments. **We all share in the punishments of Adam and Eve.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)*

b) Do you know *why* all men share in the punishments of Adam and Eve?—I will tell you. Did you ever hear of a certain little bush with little red berries, that grows in the woods? If you were to eat of these little berries, you would die, for they are poisonous. Why is that fruit poisonous?—Where does the poison come from? The poison comes up from the roots and passes into the branches and into the fruit, the little red berries. So it is with us and with the men of the entire world. All men, the whole human race, are poisoned by the sin of Adam and Eve. Adam is the root; we are the branches and the fruit. The poison of Adam's sin has passed on to all men. Therefore every baby that is born into this world has the poison of sin on its soul. Of course you do not see that sin. But there is one, who sees it just as plainly as you see the drop of water in the sunshine. It is Almighty God, whose eyes pierce the very soul of man. You see, therefore, that we share not only in the punishment of Adam and Eve, but **we share also in their sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Perhaps there are some among you who are tempted to say: "Why, a poor little infant cannot be blamed, if it is born with the stain of Adam's sin on its soul!" You are right. Neither will that child be punished for that sin; it will not be condemned to Hell. But neither does God want such a child in Heaven, for it is only a child of man, not a child of God. In such a child the eyes of its soul are blind. It could not see God in Heaven. The garment of its soul is soiled and ruined. It has not sanctifying grace. Therefore such a child is really not fit for Heaven. Why, if such a child had to appear before the angels of God with that soiled garment and in the state of sin, it would die for shame. It would not wish to remain in Heaven.

c) If Adam and Eve had not committed that sin, they would never have been cast out of Paradise; they would never have had to suffer pain or sickness or the countless miseries that afflict the human soul and the human body; they would not have been obliged to earn their living in the sweat of their brow; their bodies would never have been obliged to return into dust and the grave. Adam and Eve would have remained in the garden of delights for a while, and then they would have been taken by God directly into Heaven. And where would their children have been?—They, too, would have remained in the garden with Adam and Eve. Yes, they and all of us would have enjoyed the very same blessings that Adam and Eve enjoyed. None of us would have had to labor hard for our living; none of us would have been taken sick or been obliged to die; none of us would have been troubled by sorrow or pain or misery of any kind. There would have been no temptations, no sin, no Hell for us. The whole world, even the wild beasts, would have been subject to us, just as everything was obedient to our first parents before their fall into sin. But sad to relate, Adam and Eve sinned, and were punished severely. We, too, share in their sin and punishment. But **if Adam and Eve had remained faithful to God, we should have shared in their happiness.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

2. a) What terrible havoc Adam's sin caused to all men! Just think of the miseries I have spoken to you about a little while ago. The Bible History mentions one example after another of the sins and crimes into which men have fallen since the days of our first parents up to the time of Christ and the Apostles. The History of the Church describes for us the wickedness that men have committed from the days of Christ up to the present time. Men know what is right, and yet, they so often, so very often, do what is wrong. The body and its senses seems to fight against man's soul and to draw man away from God to the things of this

world and sin, just as iron is drawn by the power of the magnet. Just think of the many sins of anger, of jealousy, of quarreling, of impurity, of intemperance, etc., that men have been guilty of since the fall of Adam and Eve. If they were all heaped together, they would make a mountain that would reach higher than the stars of heaven; they would be more numerous than the sands of the seashore. What foolish and wicked things men have done! But all of these sins and crimes are only the outward signs that tell us that there must be something wrong within the soul and heart of man. The wormholes on the skin of an apple are signs that the apple is bad and corrupted. So, too, the many crimes and sins that men have been guilty of since Adam's fall are signs that man's nature has become bad and corrupted. **By the sin of our first parents our nature was corrupted.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

b) Now let us see more in detail, how our nature was corrupted by the sin of our first parents. It is really astonishing to note how most men that lived after Adam and Eve could have entirely forgotten the one true God and fallen into such degrading idolatry. What evils did they commit?—All that comes from the sin of our first parents. That sin darkened men's understanding and it became like night in men's minds. If a person has weak or bad eyes, he can indeed still see, but not very clearly. He cannot distinguish things that are at a distance. So, too, by Adam's sin the eye of our mind, the understanding, became darkened. Men gradually forgot God and could no longer clearly distinguish between right and wrong. Therefore they became guilty of the most abominable idolatry and of the most shameful crimes. At the same time they thought that they could please their false gods by such wicked acts. **The sin of our first parents darkened our understanding.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

c) But how could the heathens treat the poor little infants and the slaves so cruelly?—Surely, they should

have been able to understand that it was wrong to sacrifice their little children to the false god, Moloch; to expose them to the wild beasts; that it was not right to torture the slaves and even to murder their own parents! Most men had become just like the animals; they were the slaves of their own evil inclinations and passions. Their wills were so weakened that they generally preferred to do evil rather than good. We all feel that there is something within us that inclines us to do what is wrong. How hard it is for us at times to do the right thing! How difficult it is at times for us to obey! How hard we have to fight, in order to overcome our evil inclinations! All that comes from the sin of our first parents. **By the sin of our first parents our will was weakened and there was left in us a strong inclination to evil.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

3. You see, therefore, that the sin of our first parents together with its punishments has passed on to all their descendants; to all men, that have come after them into this world. We are all by nature "children of wrath," as St. Paul says (Ep. to Eph. ii, 3). All men share in some way in the sin of Adam and Eve. All men have inherited Adam's sin. Do you know what this sin is called? **The sin which we inherit from our first parents is called original sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

4. I wonder why we call this sin by the name "original" sin?

a) On a certain mountain top there is a little lake, whose water flows down the mountain side into the valley below and forms a little river, that grows bigger and bigger as it rushes on. This little lake is the source or the origin of that river. It is called Blue Lake because of the deep blue color of the water. The water of the river is also blue, just like the lake water. It is called Blue River, because it comes from Blue Lake, its source or origin. Adam and Eve are like that little lake, for from them has come a mighty stream that has

grown bigger and bigger as it hurries on over the whole earth. That stream is made up of all the men that have ever lived or that ever will live to the end of time. Adam and Eve are the source or the origin of all men, of the human race. But Adam committed sin, and with Adam's blood and life his sin passed on to all his descendants to the end of time. This sin comes from the source or origin of the human race. **Therefore it is called original sin because we are brought into the world with its guilt on our soul.** *(Repeat together; use the the blackboard.)*

But remember, dear children, that we ourselves did not commit that sin; it is not a sinful act committed by us. Our first parents committed it. We inherited it from them; they passed it on to us, their children. Nevertheless, it is really and truly a sin. The soul of every man from the first moment of its existence is deprived of sanctifying grace. The soul, therefore, is displeasing to Almighty God. It is a *sinful state or condition*—it is in the state of original sin. St. Paul says: "Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world and by sin death, so death passed upon all men, for in him (Adam) all have sinned." (Rom. v, 12). All men are in the state of original sin, except Jesus Christ and His Holy Mother.

4. Are we still in that sinful state?—No, thank God. For the good Lord in His kindness and mercy has made it easy for us to get rid of that sin. He has sent us His own Son, Jesus Christ, from Heaven to earth to take away that sin and to bring God's grace back into our hearts. You know how He did that. He suffered and died for us on the Cross. Thereby He earned grace for all men. He gives us His grace and takes away original sin through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Consequently when you were baptized, God took you out of the state of original sin and placed you in the state of grace and holiness. But tell me now: Is not your understanding still darkened; is not your will still weak and is there not still in you a strong inclination

to evil even after Baptism?—Are you not still excluded from the garden of delights? Must you not still work hard for a living? Are you not still subject to sickness, sufferings, sorrows, death and countless other miseries? Yes, all this is true. God did indeed take away original sin from us through Baptism, but He did not take away the punishments that go with original sin. He wants us to realize what an awful evil sin is and to make us fear sin. Therefore, He forgave original sin, but He left our nature corrupt or bad and He makes us suffer the punishments of original sin. Our Catechism says: **This corruption of our nature and the other punishments remain in us after original sin is forgiven.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Our first parents sinned. Therefore
   a) we all share in their *sin* and b) *punishment.*
2. Had they remained faithful—we all should have shared in their *happiness.*
3. *Original sin*—comes from our first parents—we are all born with its guilt.
4. *Punishments* for original sin:
   a) our nature is corrupted;
   b) our understanding is darkened;
   c) our will is weakened and inclined to evil.
5. This corruption of our nature remains—after original sin is forgiven through Baptism.

Synthesis. God really meant it well with man. But Adam and Eve returned evil for good. They sinned and thereby cast themselves and the whole human race into deepest misery. What kind of a sin did they commit? How did God punish them? Did their punishment pass on to all men? Do we also share in their guilt or sin? Would we have shared in their happiness, if they had remained faithful? What do we call this sin, that we inherit from Adam and Eve? Did

we commit it ourselves? Why do we call it original sin? How do we get rid of this sin? Does the punishment of original sin remain in us after the sin is taken from us? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. Many examples of the sad state of the human race because of Adam's sin are written by the finger of God in Holy Scripture. One of these examples is the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and of the Temple by the King of Babylon in the year 586 B. C. Then began the exile or captivity of the Jews, that lasted for seventy years. Jerusalem was besieged for a long time by the heathens of Babylon. A terrible famine set in, which was so great that the children starved on the streets and mothers even cooked the bodies of their children and ate them. A pest broke out and destroyed many thousands of the Jews. The enemy came into the city and laid it in ruins. They robbed the Holy of Holies and set the Temple in flames. The Prophet Jeremias, looking upon the ruins of the city and the Temple, complained in these sad words: "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is the mistress of the gentiles become as a widow! Weeping she hath wept in the night, and tears are on her cheeks" (Lamentations i, ls.). Again we read: "Upon the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept; when we remembered Sion, our distant home! On the willows in the midst thereof we hung up our harps, for how shall we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?" (Ps. 136 ls.).

What happened to the chosen people of the Lord, happened also to the whole human race. All mankind was driven out of its home in the garden of Paradise; driven into exile in this valley of tears, that has been cursed by God. Suffering the hunger, the persecution and the pest of sin with all its evil consequences! With sad hearts we weep! Thus did Adam's sin harm all

men. Thus by his sin misery and sorrow have come upon all men!

2. But God be praised! we soon again became God's children. How did that happen?—At the very moment that the priest poured the water of Baptism on our heads, the Holy Ghost with the Blood of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, washed away the hateful stain of original sin and decorated our souls with the wonderful garment of grace. And yet, we carry about with us a sad remembrance of original sin. Just think of how hard it is at times for you to learn. That comes from Adam's sin. By original sin your understanding has become darkened; it is as though your head were filled with fog or mist. And how very quickly you forget! If Adam had not sinned, all would be so different. To learn would be as easy as to play. We all have another evil that we inherited from our first parents—the inclination to evil. Here is a child that complains that it is continually tempted to bad thoughts, although it does not want to have them at all. Another child is inclined to steal; to tell lies; to do other forbidden things. Do you not often prefer to do anything except the right thing? All that comes from your evil inclinations. But you must conquer them. You must not let them make you their slave; you must be their master.

3. What an awful evil sin is! We know that from the misery, that Adam's sin caused to the whole human race. We must be careful not to commit personal sins—sins by our own understanding and free-will. If God punished one sin so severely, what will He do if we commit many, many sins? What sins do you commit most frequently? *(Have the children make an examination of conscience.)* Now let us resolve with God's help to avoid those sins for the future.

LESSON XV.

The Immaculate Conception.

Catechetical Unit:

Was any one ever preserved from original sin? L. V, Q. 50.

Preparation. Dear children, Adam's sin brought awful misery and evils of every description into this world. Just as in winter everything outside freezes in the snow and the ice, so in the days before the Saviour came the hearts of men were cold and stiff in the snow and ice of sin and every vice. Let us review the last lesson. *(Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson.)*—But in the midst of that winter of sin there sprang up, scarcely noticed by anyone, a little white flower, a little snowbell, spotless and lovely in the sight of the Lord God. That little flower was a little child, lovable and tender and beautiful. This child was not a child of Satan, but a child of grace, a child of God. She alone of all the descendants of Adam remained unspotted by even the slightest stain of sin. Do you know that wonderful child?

Aim. To-day I am going to speak to you of this one human being, who by the special grace of God was kept free from every taint of original sin and of every other sin.

Presentation and Explanation. *(Show the children a large picture of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which depicts the following elements mentioned in the Explanation.)*

1. Is not this a beautiful picture?—You see here a globe. It represents the earth on which we live. You notice a serpent on this globe. That means that the whole world, all of us, have sinned. The devil, sin, has spread out over the entire earth from beneath the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Paradise! Only one human being stands on the serpent; only one human being has the head of the serpent be-

neath her feet. That is Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. She alone was not injured by the serpent; over her the serpent had not the slightest power. She alone remained free from the poison of sin. The serpent has an apple in its mouth; for by Adam's sin, the poison of every sin, the dominion of the devil, has come upon the world. Mary is surrounded by rays of glorious light. That means that divine grace shines forth in fulness from her. They are the rays of the love of God, which descend upon her, the pure lily, the only human being that has been kept free from Adam's sin, from the guilt of original sin. Above Mary's head is a dove, the symbol of the Holy Ghost. He it is who has kept Mary free from every sin and from the power of Satan. It is His work. The Holy Ghost has purified and sanctified Mary and by a special grace has kept her free from the stain of Adam's sin, so that her soul was not even for a single moment defiled by the filth of sin. **The Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from the guilt of original sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)*

But how do we know that Mary was kept free from original sin? God Himself has told us.

a) Already in the garden of Paradise God said to the serpent: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. iii, 15). That woman is Mary. The seed of the woman is Jesus Christ, her Divine Son. The serpent is the devil. What then did God mean by those words?—He meant to say that Mary is always to be an enemy of the devil; she will always hate him and he will always hate her. Now what does the devil hate? With whom does the devil live in enmity?—Satan hates whatever is good and holy; he loves whatever is sinful and wicked. Therefore God Himself has revealed to us that Mary will never be tainted by the filth of sin; that she will never be pleasing to the devil; that she will always be good and holy. Now if Mary had been

stained by original sin even for a moment, she would have been sinful for a time and therefore she would not have been an enemy of the devil.

b) Again when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in Nazareth, he greeted her with the salutation: "Hail, full of grace!" Now if there is a single drop of water in a glass of milk, is that glass really filled with milk?—No. And if there is only the smallest drop of water, or the tiniest speck of dust in that glass, would it be really full of milk?—No. Therefore the words of the angel: "Thou art full of grace" mean: "Mary, thou art entirely without sin." You see, therefore, that the angel Gabriel said the very same thing that God Himself had said thousands of years before in the garden of Paradise.

c) The Catholic Church has always believed and taught that Mary was kept free from original sin from the very first moment of her existence. The Popes, Bishops and Priests of the Catholic Church have always taught that truth to the people from the very beginning. And on the eighth of December, 1854, in the great Cathedral of St. Peter's of Rome, Pope Pius IX, surrounded by an immense crowd of the faithful and of cardinals, bishops and priests, solemnly declared that Mary from the first moment of her existence by a special grace of her Divine Son was kept free from original sin and that all Catholics must believe that truth, if they wish to remain in the Catholic Church and save their souls. Dear children, let us now join with the millions of Catholics throughout the world and say with all our hearts: "Mary, conceived without original sin, pray for us!"

2. But *why* was Mary kept free from original sin? Was she not born of Adam and Eve just like all other men? Yes, but she was to be the Mother of the Saviour of the world. Now surely, Jesus, her Divine Son, cannot have a sinner for a Mother. Therefore her Son has kept or preserved her soul pure and immaculate or without spot by the graces, which He has earned or

merited through His sufferings and death on the Cross. Even before He was born into the world, He gave to her soul some of the grace which He was to earn or merit on the Cross, and that grace has kept her free from the poison of Adam's sin. In the meadows there flows a little brook. To the right and the left of that little brook there flow little streamlets in all directions and the water of that brook empties continually into these little streamlets. But at one of the little streamlets the water of that brook must halt! There it cannot enter, because there is a hindrance, a wall, in the way! Why is that little wall there?—It is there in order that the water of the brook may not flow into that streamlet. If that wall were taken away, how the water would rush wildly into that streamlet! Dear children, the wall that prevents the water of the brook from flowing into that streamlet is Divine Grace. The grace of Jesus Christ has placed itself like a wall before Mary's soul, to keep the filthy and muddy water of original sin out of her soul. Her soul must be kept free from the stain of Adam's sin, because the Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, was to take up His abode in that soul. It was Jesus' grace, therefore, the merits of her Divine Son, that kept or preserved her free from the sin of Adam. **The Blessed Virgin Mary, through the merits of Her Divine Son, was preserved from the guilt of original sin** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Remember that if God had not bestowed His grace upon Mary from the first moment of her existence, she too, like all men, would have been born in original sin. Jesus earned sanctifying grace for Mary and for all men by His death on the Cross. Therefore Mary, too, was redeemed by Jesus, but in a different manner from us. Jesus' merits *prevented* Mary from falling into sin; Jesus' merits *purified* us from sin. Jesus is the heavenly physician; His merits or graces are the medicine. These merits prevented Mary from falling into the deathly sickness of original sin; these

same merits cured us of the sickness of original sin, which we had contracted at our birth.

3. What a great favor Jesus bestowed upon His dear Mother! He gave her sanctifying grace from the first moment of her existence. His grace covered her soul like a beautiful garment, just as soon as her soul entered her body, or as we say, from the first moment of her conception, when God gave her to her dear parents. He preserved her soul free from the stain of original sin, He kept her soul pure and immaculate, without a single stain. Mary was pleasing and holy to God from the first moment of her life. There never was a single moment, when original sin stained her soul. Therefore sanctifying grace did not take away sin from her soul, as it does with us when we are baptized. It kept her soul free from the stain of original sin altogether, so that never, not for a single moment, was her soul disfigured by the guilt of Adam's fall. What a wonderful favor! What a special privilege to be the only one of Adam's children to receive this glorious blessing! The Church reminds us of this great privilege of Mary each year on the eighth of December, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. **This privilege is called her Immaculate Conception.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

4. Dear children, this was not the only privilege or favor bestowed upon Our Blessed Lady by her Divine Son. You know that by the sin of our first parents our nature was corrupted. We all feel how hard it is at times to do good; how strongly we are inclined to evil. Now Mary was preserved from the guilt of original sin. Therefore she was kept free also from the evil consequences of that sin.

a) *Her nature was not corrupted.* Therefore she never felt inclined to evil as we are inclined. All her thoughts and desires and actions were good and holy. She loved to do God's will and she found it easy to be virtuous and holy always. *(Blackboard.)*

b) *She never committed a single sin,* not even a venial sin all through her life. She was full of grace, which made her purer and holier than the angels of Heaven. Consequently the Church says of her these beautiful words: "Thou art all fair and there is not a spot in thee" (Canticle of Canticles iv, 7). *(Use the blackboard.)*

c) Because of the disobedience of our first parents we all must die, for "the wages of sin is death." Our bodies must return to dust. Even though Mary did not incur the guilt of original sin, nevertheless she died as all men die. But her death is not an effect of original sin, a punishment for original sin. Even Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, died. It was only proper and fitting, therefore, that the Mother of the Redeemer should be made like unto Him. Her body was placed in the grave. But that pure body was not to corrupt and decay in the grave. For from her pure body the Conqueror of death and the grave took His Flesh and Blood. We believe, therefore, that Jesus raised His Mother, body and soul, from the grave before her body could corrupt and that He *took her into Heaven, body and soul,* where she now reigns as Queen of Angels and Saints. We are reminded of this special favor or privilege each year on the fifteenth of August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven. See what glorious jewels Jesus placed in the crown of Mary, His dear Mother! *(Use the blackboard.)*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Mary alone—was preserved from the guilt of original sin—through the merits of her Divine Son.
2. The Immaculate Conception.
3. Other privileges of Mary:
   a) her nature was not corrupted;
   b) she was preserved from every sin;
   c) she was taken body and soul into Heaven.

Synthesis. Let us now review briefly what we have just learned. What is the sin called, which we inherit from our first parents? Why is it called original sin? Was any one ever preserved from original sin? What picture reminds us of this truth? Who kept Mary free from sin? How did Jesus preserve Mary from the guilt of original sin? What do we call this privilege? When do we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception? Are there any other privileges that God bstowed on Mary? Was her nature corrupted like ours? Did she ever commit any sin? Was her body left to corrupt in the grave? Where is she now? What feast reminds us of the truth, that Mary was taken body and soul into Heaven? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. Our Blessed Lady, Jesus' Beloved Mother, was the only one of Adam's children that was conceived and born without original sin. That is what God's Church teaches us in His name. Indeed God Himself has given us another proof of this truth even in our own days. In the south of France there is a small town called Lourdes, situated at the foot of the Pyrenees Mountains. In the year 1858, that is four years after the Pope solemnly defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Mother of Jesus appeared no less than eighteen times. She was seen by a girl of fourteen years, Bernadette Soubirous, a child of poor parents, who had brought her up piously and taught her to say the Rosary. About midday on the eleventh of February, 1858, Bernadette went with some other girls to pick up sticks on the banks of the Gave River, which flows at the foot of the mountains. While the Angelus was ringing from the church tower, Bernadette saw in a grotto in the rocks, on the other side of the river, the figure of a woman surrounded by a halo of bright light. "Lovelier than her I have never seen," she said later on. This Lady was clothed in a white robe, with a blue girdle around her waist and a

long white veil on her head, while from her right arm hung a rosary of white beads, the cross being of gold. She smiled kindly on Bernadette. The little girl fell on her knees and tried to tell her beads, but she was so frightened, that she could not even make the sign of the cross. Seeing this the Lady made the sign of the cross herself. Then the child taking courage, blessed herself, and recited the rosary all through. When she had finished, the apparition suddenly disappeared just as a flame goes out. Bernadette told her companions what she had seen, and when she got home, she told her mother also.

The next Sunday the girl went with her companions to the same spot, taking holy water with her. Scarcely had she begun to say her beads, when the same figure appeared again. This time Bernadette sprinkled some holy water in the direction of the figure; but instead of disappearing the Lady smiled kindly, bowed her head, and came nearer. The other children saw nothing extraordinary. They only noticed that Bernadette's face beamed with delight. When the child went to the grotto for the third time, she was accompanied by two women. On this occasion the shining figure asked Bernadette to come thither daily for two weeks and to bring a great many people with her. Accordingly when the vision again took place, several hundred people were present. Later on they came by the thousands. No one but Bernadette saw the apparitions. Once when Our Lady appeared to her, she said to Bernadette: "Go and tell the priest, that it is my wish that a church should be erected here, to which the people shall come in procession." Bernadette accordingly went to the parish priest and delivered the message. He bade her to tell the Lady first of all to give a proof of her power, and to let that proof be making a rosebush that grew at her feet come into leaf and bloom in the winter. The next time the Lady appeared, Bernadette did as the priest had asked; but the Lady did not comply with her request. Her reply was: "Penance, penance,

penance!" Somewhat later she said to the girl: "Drink some of the water of this spring, and wash yourself in it." The child put her hands down to the spot indicated to find the spring, and the water came welling up out of the dry ground with ever increasing speed. From that time forth the spring has yielded eighty-five gallons a minute. This water, which appeared like ordinary water, has wonderful healing properties; by the use of it countless cures have been effected and are still effected to this day.

On the twenty-fifth of March, the Feast of the Annunciation, Bernadette begged the Lady to tell her her name. After she had repeated her request four times, the Lady with clasped hands answered sweetly: "I am the Immaculate Conception!" Afraid lest she should forget these words, the girl hastened to the priest and repeated them to him. After a time the grotto was closed by the police and all its decorations were taken away. But the Emperor, Napoleon III, again allowed the grotto to be opened and to be visited by all.

Miracles began to occur in such numbers, that the Bishop of the diocese was compelled to look into the matter. He appointed a number of learned and holy men to examine into all the circumstances and to look into all the cures that had been made. After four years he delivered his judgment about the visions and the cures. In the year 1862 he sent out a letter to the Catholics of his diocese, in which he solemnly told them, that real miracles had indeed taken place at the grotto of Lourdes, which could not be explained except by the power of God Himself. He then asked for money to build a church. A great sum of money was collected, so that a magnificent sanctuary could be built, which has since become a celebrated place of pilgrimage. In the year 1866 Bernadette entered a convent of the Sisters of Charity (at Nevers), where she led a very holy life. Before her death she solemnly stated that all that

she had related concerning the wonderful visions at Lourdes was strictly true.

Up to the year 1908, the fiftieth anniversary, 5,297 pilgrimages had taken place at Lourdes with nearly five millions of pilgrims. Besides these solemn processions of pious Catholics many millions of people from all parts of the world came alone or in crowds of two or more to visit the famous shrine. Indeed the railroad station of Lourdes receives each year over a million travelers. At least four thousand cures have taken place in the last fifty years—cures of various kinds, from consumption, cancer, sores, tumors, blindness, deafness, lameness, etc. Hundreds of doctors visit the shrine each year, and even those, who do not believe, must acknowledge that no natural power could do the wonderful things that have occurred at Lourdes.

Thus did God Himself even in our own times give many and wonderful proofs of the doctrine of our holy Faith, that the Blessed Virgin Mary, through the merits of her Divine Son, was preserved from the guilt of original sin. *(Show the children a large picture of Lourdes and its shrine; also a copy of Dr. Boissarie's book:* "Heaven's Recent Wonders or the Work of Lourdes" transl. by Rev. C. Van Der Donkt, publ. by Pustet & Co., N. Y.).

2. From the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary we can learn what God hates and what God loves. He never loved any human being more than He loves Mary. Now from what did He preserve her?—Not indeed from poverty, persecutions or sorrow, but from every sin; yes, even from the danger of sin. Therefore God so hates and detests sin, that He did not permit even the shadow of sin, even for a moment, to disfigure the pure soul of Mary, His dear Mother. He gave her sanctifying grace in richest abundance. Dear children, sanctifying grace is what God values most highly and that grace, as the richest treasure, He gave to His Mother from the very first moment of her existence. Therefore try always to

please God by keeping His grace in your hearts. When the devil tempts you to sin, think of Mary's purity of soul and call out to her to spread her protecting mantle over you. She will never forsake you, if you have recourse to her. Wear a little medal of the Immaculate Conception; kiss it devoutly each morning and beg Mary to preserve your soul from every stain of sin. Let us now recite devoutly this little prayer to Mary: "Praised be the Holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. Amen." (100 days indulgence.)

LESSON XVI.

The Promise of the Redeemer.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Did God abandon man after he fell into sin? L. VII, Q. 60.

2) Did the Son of God become man immediately after the sin of our first parents? L. VII, Q. 72.

3) How could they be saved, who lived before the Son of God became man? L. VII, Q. 73.

Preparation. Dear children, there was only one among the children of our first parents, who did not incur the guilt and the evil effects of original sin. Let us review what we have learned about this in the last class. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.)*—Just imagine, that a poor abandoned child has been adopted by a very wealthy man and has lived with him in the greatest happiness. But alas! one day that child offended its kind foster father most grievously and spoiled his most beautiful and costly picture. The angry father chases that child out of his house and says: "Do not come into my sight again, until you bring back my picture just as it was before you spoiled it!" The unfortunate child wanders about miserably, suffering hunger and need in the midst of

strangers. Many a time it thinks of the happiness and the good fortune it once enjoyed. Now it realizes how terribly miserable it really is. These recollections fill the heart of that child with bitter anguish. Alas! who will help this poor child? No one can restore that spoiled picture.

Dear children, after the disobedience of our first parents the misery of the human race was infinitely greater than that of the little child I have just been telling you about. All men lost a most wonderful picture, the image and likeness of God Himself, sanctifying grace. They were excluded from the glorious happiness of Heaven, until they could bring back that beautiful and precious picture, sanctifying grace. But alas! no man, no angel, could restore that lost treasure. For no man, no angel, only God Himself, could produce such a masterpiece of beauty and glory—the image and likeness of the great God. And yet, there was consolation given to Adam and Eve and their children in the midst of their misery.

Aim. Listen attentively and I shall show you what consolation was given to all men after the sin of Adam; I shall tell you how God promised to send a Redeemer to mankind to restore that lost image of God in the hearts of men.

Presentation and Explanation. Did you ever notice the sun rising in the early morning?—First it was dark night; then gradually it begins to grow light in the distant east. Slowly the shadows of the night vanish. It becomes brighter and brighter. In a little while the rays of the morning sun fall upon the earth. Then the sun appears in the heavens like a mighty king in full glory and majesty. This is a picture of the coming Redeemer, for Jesus Christ is the Sun of Justice.

1. a.) After Adam's sin dark night settled down upon the hearts and minds of men. Not a single ray of heavenly grace came forth from the Sun of Justice. All men would surely have perished miserably. Hell rejoiced and was glad. The devil said to his wicked

spirits: "Look at man, the masterpiece of God's creation. Now he is mine!"—Yes, after that sin no man could have obtained grace again and salvation. But Hell rejoiced too soon; for God had pity on mankind. You know what He promised to our first parents in the garden of Paradise. He said to the serpent: "I will place enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. She will crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. iii, 15). Do you understand what these words mean?—They are a little mysterious and hard to grasp. God wishes to say: "Some day a woman will come into this world, who will be stronger than the serpent, the devil. This woman will crush the serpent's head." Now what has the serpent, the devil, in his head?—To destroy all men, that is the devil's plan. But the woman will set at nought this devilish plan. Do you know who this woman is?—It is Mary, the Mother of the Saviour. She has given us the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Jesus saved us from the power of Satan and Hell; He paid the debt we owed to God for our sins, and the price He paid was His own most Precious Blood. He restored the spoiled image and likeness of God in our hearts. God, the Father, was more than satisfied with the price that Jesus paid, for it was more than enough. Jesus opened the gates of Heaven again to all men. This is the consoling news God made known to poor sinful men. **God did not abandon man after he fell into sin, but promised to send him a Redeemer, who was to satisfy for man's sin and reopen to him the gates of Heaven.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

This was the first Gospel, the first glad tidings of salvation, the early dawn of our redemption. How Adam and Eve must have rejoiced and how they must have thanked God for this great blessing! But the devil became angry and Hell stormed in helpless rage! How good God is to men! God rejected the angels

and cast them out of Heaven, but to men He promised a Redeemer and Heaven.

b) The Redeemer is to come! That was indeed a consolation to our first parents and to all their children in their misery. They told the glad news to their children and their children told it to their children's children. This consoling Gospel was never to be forgotten. Consequently God chose one nation out of all the peoples of the world to be His own peculiar people. This nation was the Jewish nation, the people of Israel. Abraham was the father of the chosen people of God. To him God made the promise: "I will make thee to be the father of a great nation. I will bless thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii, 18). Now through whom was this wonderful blessing to come?—Abraham was to become the father of the people, from whom the Redeemer of the world was to be born. But the venerable Patriarch, Abraham, died and did not live to see the coming of the Saviour.

c) Later on the Lord God sent a great Leader, Moses, to His chosen people. To him, too, God made the promise of the Redeemer. Therefore Moses in the name of the Lord said to the people of Israel: "The Lord, thy God, will raise up to thee a Prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren: Him shalt thou hear" (Deut. xviii, 15.) Now who was this great Prophet?—But the people of Israel had to wait a long, long time for the coming of this Prophet. In order that they might not lose courage, God sent from time to time great and holy men, the Prophets, to announce to the chosen people of God the coming of the Redeemer. These messengers of the Lord were allowed to look into the distant future. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit they saw the Redeemer long before He came into this world. They saw Him coming nearer and nearer just as the sun in the heavens in the early morning gradually rises higher and higher. All that the prophets foresaw they foretold to the chosen people of God and a great

deal of what they saw they wrote in the book, called the Holy Bible, or the Sacred Scriptures. You see, therefore, that God did not abandon man after he fell into sin, but promised to send him a Redeemer, who was to satisfy for man's sin and reopen to him the gates of Heaven. *(Repeat together).*

2. Dear children, it is wonderful to think of what the Prophets foretold concerning the Redeemer of the world. Let us see at least some of the many remarkable things, that they foretold to the people.

a) The Prophet Daniel (ix, 25s), foretold *the time of the Redeemer's birth.* Daniel lived at the time, when the chosen people of the Lord were in exile or captivity in Babylon, a long distance from their home in Palestine. Many years before another Prophet, Jeremias, had announced that the captivity of the Jews was to last for seventy years. These seventy years were drawing to a close now, and Daniel like all the Jews longed for the coming of the time when he would be permitted to return home. He prayed earnestly to God, to free him and the rest of the Israelites from the Babylonian Captivity. One day while praying the angel Gabriel appeared to him and said: "Seventy weeks (of years) are shortened upon thy people and upon thy holy city. Know then and take notice; from the time, that permission is given to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ, the Prince, there shall be seven weeks (of years) and sixty-two weeks (of years). After sixty-two weeks (of years) Christ shall be slain." *(Use the blackboard for the following computation.)* Now let us see what this prophecy means. Daniel says: "Seventy weeks (of years) you must wait; then the Redeemer will be slain." Seventy weeks (of years) (70x7) are 490 years. But these seventy weeks (of years) are to be shortened, as Daniel says, by one-half week (that is, three and one-half years). 490—3½ are 486½ years. In other words, from the time when the Jews will be allowed to rebuild the city of Jerusalem to the death of the Christ, the Redeemer, are 486½

years. Now pay attention! When was permission given to the Jews to rebuild the city of Jerusalem? It was given to them in the year 453 B. C. Christ lived 33½ years on earth. Therefore 453+33½ years are 486½ years. You see, therefore, that this agrees exactly with what Daniel foretold about the time when the Redeemer was to come into this world.

(The catechist will use the blackboard after each prophecy as noted in the diagram below just above the synthesis).

b) The Prophet Micheas (v. 2) foretold *the place where the Redeemer was to be born.* He says: "Thou, Bethlehem, art a little one (village) among the princely cities of Juda: out of thee He shall come forth unto Me, That is to be the Ruler in Israel, and His going forth (birth) is from the beginning, from the days of eternity." Who is this Ruler or King of Israel?—He is none other than Christ, the Redeemer of the world. The Jews knew that the Messias or the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. For when the three wise men from the East asked: "Where is the new born King of the Jews?" King Herod had the High Priests and the Scribes come together and asked them the question, where the Christ was to be born. They answered: "In Bethlehem of Juda, for so it is written by the Prophet Micheas" (Mat. ii, 5).

c) Other Prophets foretold *the circumstances of the Messias' life, sufferings and death.*

Thus 1. the Prophet Isaias (vii, 14) prophecied who was to be *the Mother of the Messias or the Christ.* He says: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and His name shall be called Emmanuel or God with us." His Mother is to be a virgin.

2. The same Prophet (ix, 6) foretold that the Redeemer was to be at the same time *both God and Man.* These are his words: "A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace." In another place of his

writings he says: "God Himself will come and will save you" (xxxv, 4). Through the Prophet Nathan God promised King David the Redeemer in the words: "He (the Redeemer) will call Me Father and I will call Him Son" (II Kings, vii, 14); therefore the Redeemer is to be the Son of God.

3. Moses foretold that the Redeemer is to be *a great Prophet* (Deut. xiii, 18) and Isaias (xlix, 1-6) prophecied that the Redeemer is to be a *great Teacher*. Hence the Jews named the Messias or the Christ "the Prophet Who was to come into the world" (John vi, 14).

4. The Redeemer is to be *a worker of miracles*, as Isaias says: "God Himself shall come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be unstopped" (xxxv, 5-7).

5. The Redeemer is to be *a Priest;* for in the sixth Psalm (v. 4) the Prophet David says: "The Lord hath sworn and He will not repent: Thou (the Redeemer) art a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." Who was Melchisedech?—He was a king and a priest, who offered to the Lord a sacrifice of bread and wine. Consequently the Redeemer is also to offer a sacrifice of bread and wine to the Lord and that sacrifice is to be offered without end. You know when the Redeemer offered that sacrifice for the first time. He did it at the Last Supper and He continues to offer it in Holy Mass from the rising to the setting of the sun.

6. The Saviour is to be *a King*, who is to rule over a new kingdom, that is to extend over the whole earth and to last to the end of time. (Cf. Jer. xxiii, 5; Dan. ii, 44, etc.) That is the reason why Jesus proclaimed Himself King before Pontius Pilate.

7. The Prophets also foretold *the sufferings and the death of the Messias.* For instance, Zacharias (ix. 9) tells us that the Redeemer is to enter Jerusalem in humility riding on an ass. When did that happen?—The same Prophet (xi. 12s.) narrates that the Messias

is to be sold for thirty pieces of silver. When was this prophecy fulfilled? David tells us that the Messias is to be betrayed by one who ate at the same table with Him (Ps. xl, 10). Who betrayed Christ?—The disciples of the Redeemer are to forsake Him at the time of His Passion, as Zacharias tells us (xiii,7). Was that prophecy fulfilled?—The Redeemer is to be mocked (Ps. xxi, 7), beaten, spit upon (Isaias 1, 6), scourged (Ps. lxxii, 14), crowned with thorns (Canticle of Canticles iii, 11) and given gall and vinegar to drink (Ps. lxviii, 22). His garments are to be divided and lots are to be cast for His vesture (Ps. xxi, 19). His feet and hands are to be pierced with nails (Ps. xxi, 17). He is to die between two evil doers (Isaias liii, 9). When were all these prophecies fulfilled?—Dear children, when one reads the prophecies of the Old Testament, one imagines that the Prophets stood beside the Redeemer and saw all these things take place before their eyes. And yet, they foretold all these things many, many hundreds of years before the Redeemer came into this world.

8. The Prophets foretold also *the resurrection and the ascension of the Saviour.* Thus David (Ps. xv, 10) says: "Thou wilt not leave My Soul in Hell (that is, in the shadow of death); nor wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption." How was that prophecy fulfilled?—In another Psalm (xxiii, 7) David says: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates; and the King of glory shall enter in." And he says (Ps. lxvii, 33s.): "Sing to God, ye kingdoms of the earth: sing ye to the Lord: sing ye to God, Who mounteth above the Heaven of Heavens to the East." Even the place where Jesus is to ascend into Heaven is mentioned, for the Mount of Olives, from which Jesus went up into Heaven, is situated to the east of Jerusalem.

9. Finally the Prophets foretold also *the foundation and the eternal duration of the Church of the Redeemer.* King David (Ps. lxxi, 8, 11) speaking of the kingdom

or the Church of the Messias says: "He shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. And all the kings of the earth shall adore Him: and all the nations shall serve Him." Yes, the kingdom of the Messias, the Redeemer, is the Church; and that Church is to be catholic or universal, for it is to be found in every country of the world and is to embrace all the peoples of the earth. Moreover, that kingdom is to last forever and in that kingdom there is to be offered to the Lord a perpetual sacrifice. That is what the last of the Prophets, Malachias, said at least four hundred years before the Redeemer came into the world. These are the words of the Prophet: "From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof My name is great among the gentiles, and there is offered up to My name a clean oblation." (i, 11).

Dear children, the holy Prophets foresaw all these things many centuries before the Redeemer came into our midst and they foretold all to the chosen people of the Lord God. Thus the picture of the Messias or the Redeemer grew more and more distinct just as the rising morning sun. But the longing of the people of God also became greater and greater. With burning desire they prayed to God: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour" (Isaias xiv, 8). At last after long and anxious waiting the night was over and the daylight appeared. The gracious day has come, "the fulness of time," which has brought consolation to the world. That day is Christmas.

3. Adam and Eve believed most probably, that they would see the Redeemer. Hundreds and thousands of times they must have called out to Heaven: "O! God send us the Redeemer soon." But in this they were mistaken, for they lived and died without having seen the Saviour. They had to be content with the promises that God gave them about the Messias to come. Therefore our Catechism says: **The Son of God did not become**

man immediately after the sin of our first parents, but was promised to them as a Redeemer. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Now let us see what happened to all those men, who died before the Redeemer came into the world. By Adam's sin the gates of Heaven were closed against the first man and woman and against all their children. No one could enter Heaven until the Redeemer came. Were all these people lost; were they all condemned to Hell?—No, for God in His mercy had promised to send the Redeemer, who was to reopen the gates of Heaven and to bring grace to all. Our first parents believed in the Redeemer to come and in His power and goodness. They prayed earnestly for His coming and taught their children to believe and hope in the Redeemer and to pray for His advent. This pleased God and therefore He did not leave them in their sins, but gave them grace even before the Saviour came. Our first parents and many, very many of their children obeyed the Commandments which the Lord announced to them. Thereby they showed that they honored, served, and loved God. This pleased the Lord and He gave them His grace. By making use of these graces all these faithful souls could live in holiness and justice before the face of God. Consequently there were many saints in the Old Testament, for instance, Abel, Seth, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph of Egypt, David and the Prophets. What grace was it that saved them?—It was the very same grace that flowed from the Sacred Heart of the Redeemer on the Cross of Mount Calvary. It was the very same grace through which we are to be saved. The Father saw that grace even before the Redeemer died for our sins and gave that grace to all that were to be saved. **They who lived before the Son of God became man could be saved by believing in a Redcemer to come and by keeping His commandments.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But what about the Gentiles, those peoples, who

were not of the chosen people of God?—They did not know that a Redeemer was to come and they had never heard of His commandments. Were they all lost?—No, for they heard the voice of God speaking to them in their hearts. If they listened to that voice and followed it as best they could; if they were truly sorry for their sins and loved the Lord with all their hearts, they too, received grace from the Redeemer and were saved by that grace. Thus the Redeemer has always been the consolation and the hope of God's children. Thus religion has at all times been the same, since the beginning of the world. How tenderly God has watched over all men, even after they offended Him by sin!

Write on the blackboard:

1. God promised a Redeemer to our first parents.
   He renewed that promise through Moses and the Prophets.

2. Prophecies concerning the Redeemer:
   a) time and place of His birth;
   b) circumstances of His life, sufferings, death;
   c) foundation and eternal duration of His Church.
   All these prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
   Therefore He is the promised Redeemer.

3. Redeemer did not come for many thousands of years.

4. Before His coming salvation could be obtained:
   a) by faith in the Redeemer to come;
   b) by keeping His commandments.

Synthesis. What we have just learned is like the kindly sunshine after the rain. Let us review it briefly. Without God's grace no man could be saved. Did God abandon man after he fell into sin? To whom did God promise a Redeemer? Through whom did God renew that promise? What did the Lord foretell about the Redeemer? Who is the Redeemer? How do we know

that He is the Redeemer? Did God send the Redeemer at once? Why did He make man wait so long? Did all men, who died before the Redeemer came, lose their souls? How could they be saved? Who earned this grace? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Six thousand years have already passed since God first promised to send the Redeemer. Prophets foretold many things about the Saviour. They drew a picture of His entire life. They foretold many things that He was to suffer and to do. And thus the Jews had in advance, as it were, a photograph of the coming Redeemer. But when He really came they did not recognize Him. They did not believe in the Messias, but rejected Him and crucified Him. How could they be so blind?—It was on account of their sins. Here again you see what evil sin can produce. The Jews are still waiting for the Messias to come. But they will wait in vain; He will not come again. O! yes He will indeed come again. But then He will come no longer as a Redeemer, but as a Judge. Then their eyes will be opened.

2. Every year we celebrate Advent: four weeks, or at least four Sundays, before Christmas. But why just four weeks?—This little Advent is a picture of the great Advent, that lasted four thousand years. Just as the Jews waited for the coming Redeemer during that great Advent by prayers and holy expectation, so too, we Christians wait during the little Advent each year in holy and earnest impatience for the Christ Child and pray and sing: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour" (Isaias xlv, 8).

But perhaps some of you will say: "I do not understand, why we should continue to prepare for the birth of the Christ! He has already come more than 1900 years ago!" Yes, the Messias, the Redeemer, has come a long time ago; but for many He has come in vain.

They refuse to open their hearts to Him. Their sins are dearer to them than the Christ Child. Do you want to belong to this class of sinners?—Well then, celebrate Advent as well as you can, and at Christmas the Christ Child will be born again in your hearts.

LESSON XVII.

Jesus Christ—The Promised Redeemer.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Who is the Redeemer? L. VII, Q. 61.
2) What do you believe of Jesus Christ? L. VII, Q. 62.
3) How was the Son of God made man? L. VII, Q. 70.
4) What do you mean by the Incarnation? L, VII, Q. 69.
5) On what day was the Son of God conceived and made man? L. VII, Q. 74.
6) On what day was Christ born? L. VII, Q. 75.
7) Is the Blessed Virgin Mary truly the Mother of God? L. VII, Q. 71.

Preparation. God did not abandon man after he fell into sin, but promised to send him a Redeemer. We learned about the promised Saviour in the last lesson. Let us review this teaching briefly. *(Question on the preceding lesson).*—Dear children, a great criminal was languishing in prison bound hand and foot with heavy chains. He had grievously offended a kind king on several occasions and had even attempted to take the king's life. Therefore now he is condemned to death. The day of his execution is at hand. Filled with terror at the thought of his approaching death, the condemned man hears people drawing near his dungeon. He thinks that they are his executioners. With a heavy creaking noise the iron bars are shoved back; the door opens. And who enters?—The executioners?—O, no! It is

the king's only son, who appears. With kind and forgiving look he approaches the deadly enemy of the king and embraces him and says: "Brother! be of good cheer. My father has mercy on you for my sake. He sends me to free you from your chains, to grant you your life! I myself will bear these chains and give my life for you!"

This story sounds like a fairy tale, a fable. And yet, it is no fable; it is true. It actually has happened; indeed in an infintely more beautiful manner. It is over 1900 years since the only Son of the eternal King, the only Son of God Himself, came down from His splendid throne of glory into this dark and dreary dungeon, into this world, where for more than 4,000 years all mankind lay chained to sin and misery, condemned to death.

Aim. This Redeemer of the human race is indeed the Saviour and Him we shall now contemplate lovingly.

Presentation. The great Advent, that lasted for over four thousand years, was at an end. The "fullness of time" was come: the time between Adam and the Redeemer was completed. In those days there lived a poor, but holy virgin consecrated to the Lord. The virgin's name was Mary. Mary, too, prayed with all the pious Jews: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One!"

Once while she was all alone in her little room in Nazareth praying, suddenly a heavenly light shone all around her. What is it?—Behold an angel of the Lord, clothed in more than earthly beauty, stands before her. Reverently he greets Mary with the words: "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women." You can well imagine how frightened Mary was. She thought within herself what this salutation meant. But the angel said to her: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive a Son and thou shalt call Him Jesus. He shall be great and the Lord God shall give unto Him

the throne of David His father, and He shall rule in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end!" But Mary said to the angel: "How shall this be done?"—And the angel answered: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore the Holy One, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God!" Then Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word!" (Luke i, 27s). "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" (John i ,14). *(Show the children a large picture of the Annunciation.)*

Soon afterwards the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in his sleep and said to him: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary to wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins" (Mat. i, 20s). That was the last promise that God made concerning the Redeemer to come.

About nine months later Joseph and Mary went to the humble village of Bethlehem in Judea, in order to be enrolled in the census. Near this little village in a stable the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, was born into the world. His parents wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Shepherds from the neighbourhood, invited by angel voices, came and adored the new born Saviour. *(Show the children a large picture of the Nativity.)*

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, what happened in that quiet, little village of Nazareth in Galilee, is indeed truly wonderful. God Himself sent a heavenly messenger to that simple, humble Virgin, Mary. What message did the angel bring to Mary? "Thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name *Jesus"!* In like manner the angel told Joseph this message: "Thou shalt call His name *Jesus"!* Then the angel also gave the reason why this child was to be

called by that name: "For He shall save His people from their sins"! Now we know what this child of Mary is to be—a Saviour, for He is to take away the sins of His people. The name "Jesus" is a Hebrew word, which in English means "Saviour," that is, one who brings salvation to men. Sometimes you see this sign, IHS. *(Blackboard)*. What does this sign stand for? It stands for the first three letters of the word Jesus in the Greek language. Yes, He has finally come, the Saviour, the Redeemer, whom God promised to our first parents; the Saviour, of whom the Prophets had spoken so frequently waiting so long and so earnestly. **Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus is the Redeemer of mankind.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)* The Church celebrates a special day in honor of Jesus' Holy Name—the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. It occurs each year on the Sunday between the second and fifth of January, unless a higher feast occurs, in which case it is celebrated on the second of January.

b) But there are some other remarkable things that the angel announced to Mary concerning the Redeemer. He said to her: "The Lord God will give unto Him the throne of David, His father. And He shall rule in the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end"! Now if Jesus is to receive a throne, He must be a king. Yes, Jesus is to become a mighty king, for He is to found a kingdom, the kingdom of God on earth, and that kingdom is to last forever. The Jews waited long and patiently for this kingdom, but they were dreaming of a temporal and an earthly kingdom. Therefore they called the coming Redeemer the "Messias," or what amounts to the same thing, the *"Christ."* The word "Christ" is derived from the Greek word "Christos," which in English means the "Anointed One." But why was Christ called by the name "Christ" or the "Anointed One"? To anoint one in the Old Testament meant to bestow the highest office upon one; the office of Prophet to teach the people; the office of

Priest to offer sacrifice to God, and the office of King to rule the people. Whosoever was made Prophet, Priest or King in the Old Testament had to kneel down, while he, who was appointed by God for this work, poured oil upon the head of the person chosen to become Prophet, Priest and King. You remember from your Bible History the story of how the Prophet Samuel made the shepherd boy, David, king by pouring oil upon his head in the name and at the command of the Lord God. Now the Messias, the Redeemer, was to take upon Himself this threefold office of Prophet, Priest and King, for in the Old Testament these offices were merely types or shadows of the threefold power of the Redeemer. When He came, the offices of Prophet, Priest and King of the Old Testament were to cease. Yes, the Redeemer is a Prophet, the greatest of all the Prophets, for He is God Himself made man to teach us the way to Heaven. The Messias is a Priest, yes, the great High Priest, for He has offered to the Lord the adorable sacrifice of Himself on the Cross and continues to offer that same sacrifice unceasingly in Holy Mass. The Redeemer is a King, the King of kings, for He is the King of Heaven and earth. Now who anointed Jesus for this threefold office? Jesus was solemnly anointed Prophet, Priest and King, not by any man, not by oil, but by the Holy Ghost and the mighty power of God Himself. Therefore the Holy Scripture (Acts of Ap. x, 38) says: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost." You see, therefore, that Jesus is rightly called the Christ or the Anointed One. How full of meaning is not that Sacred Name of Jesus Christ—the Saviour and Anointed Prophet, Priest and King! **Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard, filling in the word Christ.)*

2. Now let us see what other wonderful things the angel announced to Mary. He said these words: "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High"! Son of the Most High? Then Jesus must be

in very truth the *Son of God!* Yes, so He is. For the angel added even more clearly the following words: "Therefore the Holy One, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Now we know who is to come as Saviour—God's own dear Son. What a wonderful truth! Who could have thought such a thing possible? And yet, many hundreds of years before the Prophet Isaias (xxxv, 4) had prophecied: "God Himself will come to save you." Yes, Jesus Christ is the true and only Son of God, the Father. **I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Father, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God and true man.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

3. When the angel announced these great things concerning the Christ Child, Mary asked: "How shall this be done? How am I to become the Mother of God?"—Then the angel answered and made known to her the great mystery: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee!" He meant to say: "The Holy Spirit of God will bring it about, that the Son of God will become a little Child and you will be made the Mother of God!" Then Mary gave her consent. What did she say?—"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word!" At that moment something great and mysterious happened. Mary received the Divine Child from the Holy Ghost—the Son of God became man within the bosom of Mary. Our Catechism says: **The Son of God was conceived and made man by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Dear children, we shall never be able to understand the great love of Jesus for us. All the angels of Heaven were astonished at it and cried out to one another: "See! how the Son of God loves men. He Himself has become a man!" Yes, God's own dear Son has taken a body and a soul like other men. That is what the Holy Scripture tells us in these words of St. John (i, 14): "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us."

By the "Word" is meant the Son of God, who is true God like the Father and the Holy Ghost. He "was made flesh," that is, He took a body like ours—He was made man. Do you know what we call this truth of our holy Faith?—This doctrine, that the Son of God was made man, we call by the word "Incarnation." **By the Incarnation I mean that the Son of God was made man.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. The great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God occurred in the little house at Nazareth over 1900 years ago. The Church would have her children always remember this glorious event. Therefore each year on the 25th day of March she celebrates the Feast of the Annunciation. While the choir is singing the Credo in the High Mass on that Feast (and again on Christmas), the priest leaves the bench and kneels at the foot of the altar during the chanting of the words: "Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine: ET HOMO FACTUS EST" ("And He (the Son of God) was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary: AND WAS MADE FLESH"). **The Son of God was conceived and made man on Annunciation day, the day on which the angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary, that she was to be the Mother of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

6. But the Son of God had not yet been born into the world. When did that occur?—Nine months after the angel had announced this solemn message to the Virgin Mary, the first Christmas came. Then we received the Christ Child from Mary—then the Son of God was born into this world. Tell me what happened on that blessed day. Why did Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem?—Did they find a night's lodging in the inn?—Why not? Where did they spend the night? What happened in the stable?—**Christ was born on Christmas day in a stable at Bethlehem.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

a) The *day* on which Christ was born into the world is the most important of all days, that went before and that came after Him. The day and the year of Jesus'

birth occupy the middle place of all times. Consequently the time that was before Jesus' birth we call the time before Christ. For instance, we say in the year 320 B. C. The time after Christ's birth we express in this way: in the year 1919 A. D. (Anno Domini, in the year of the Lord 1919). Christ stands in the very center of all time! No king, no kingdom, is as important as Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, the Church. The whole world, the course of all time, must arrange themselves according to Him.

b) The *place* where the Redeemer was born is just a short distance outside of Bethlehem. The word "Bethlehem" means "the house of bread" and is situated about six miles south of Jerusalem. *(Show its location on a map.)* At present Bethlehem consists of several hundred beautiful white houses. It numbers from 3000 to 6000 inhabitants, but in the days of Christ it seems to have been much smaller. The place of the birth or Nativity of Christ is marked by a church. Below the church is a grotto of rock about 43 feet long, 13 feet wide, and 10 feet high. The vault or roof of the grotto is supported by three marble pillars. Two pairs of stairs, one on each side of the church, lead down to the grotto of the Nativity, fifteen steps below the floor of the church. The place is lighted up by 32 lamps, which burn night and day. Between the landings of the two stairs, in the background of the grotto, is a semi-circular place, about 8 feet high and 4 feet wide. Its floor is covered with white marble and jaspar stone, a silver star marking the middle. The star bears the inscription: "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est" (Here of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ was born.") Over the star, but under the table of an altar which rests on the arch, hang sixteen lamps. A few steps to the southwest is the place where the manger stood. This precious relic of wood has long since been transported to Rome. Near where the manger stood we see the Altar of the Wise Men.

7. In that solemn hour when the angel Gabriel came

to Mary, the Blessed Virgin received a great, a very great dignity from God. She became the Mother of God, for her child is not merely a child of man like the rest of us, but the Divine Child, the very Son of God. Mary gave birth to a man, who is at the same time God Himself. The Son of God took a body from Mary. In other words, Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ is God. Therefore Mary is the Mother of God. Now we can understand, why Mary was preserved from original sin; now we can grasp better why Mary is called the "Queen of Heaven," for she is God's own dear Mother. **The Blessed Virgin Mary is truly the Mother of God, because the same Divine Person, who is the Son of God, is also the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

That is the reason, why we say in the Apostles' Creed the following words: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Each time we say the Joyful Mysteries of the most holy Rosary, we are reminded of the deep mysteries of the Incarnation and the Birth or Nativity of the world's Redeemer. Tell me: what is the first Joyful Mystery? the third Joyful Mystery?

8. Dear children, when the Christ Child came into this world, He needed a father, too. Therefore God chose "a pious and just man," *St. Joseph.* This holy man was selected by God to take care of Jesus, to watch over Him and to guard Him. Therefore he is called *the foster-father of Jesus.* Now I am going to see, who of you can think correctly. Who are the father and the mother of Jesus?—Jesus, the Redeemer, is God. As God Jesus had a heavenly Father, but no Mother. Jesus Christ is also man. As man Jesus had a Mother, but no Father. Who then is St. Joseph? The Church celebrates the Feast of St. Joseph each year on the 19th day of March. She celebrates another Feast in honor of St. Joseph, called the Patronage of St. Joseph, after Easter (on the Wednesday of the second week

after the Octave of Easter). The reason of this second Feast, is to remind us of the fact that St. Joseph is the Patron, the Fosterfather, of the great Family, the Church. He protects the Church by praying to Jesus for us all. Jesus, Mary, Joseph—they form *the Holy Family.*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Jesus Christ—the Redeemer.
   a) Jesus—Saviour.
   b) Christ—the Anointed, the Christ, the Messias, Prophet, Priest, King.
2. Jesus Christ—the Son of God—true God—true man.
3. Jesus Christ made man by the Holy Ghost.—Annunciation day.
4. Jesus Christ made man—the Incarnation.
5. Jesus Christ—born on Christmas day—at Bethlehem.
6. Mary—the Mother of God.
   Joseph—the Foster-father of Jesus.

Synthesis. Today we have learned about the great mystery of the Incarnation of God. "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord." These words mean that the Redeemer, whom God promised and sent to us men, is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father. Who then is the Redeemer? What does the word "Jesus" mean? the word "Christ"? Why is Jesus called the Christ or the Anointed One? Say the third article of the Apostles' Creed. What do these words mean? From whom did Jesus take His body? On what day did Christ become man? Is Mary really the Mother of God? Why? Where was Christ born? When? Did Jesus Christ have a father? Who was Jesus' father? Who is St. Joseph? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Our Blessed Saviour received the name "Jesus." That is the holiest of all names in Heaven and on earth. God, the Father, gave this name; God, the Son, bore that name. All Hell trembles at the sound of the Holy Name of Jesus. And yet, what do careless and wicked men do?—They misuse this name, the most sacred of all names, to curse and to blaspheme. How could men ever do such a wicked thing?—I believe the devils invented cursing. Dear children, did you ever curse?—Did you ever use God's Holy Name carelessly?—If you did, you had better beg God's pardon: "My Jesus, mercy!" From henceforth hold that Sacred Name in reverence! Newton, the great astronomer, uncovered his head every time he spoke the name of God. You, too, ought to bow your heads whenever you pronounce the Holy Name of Jesus. This name ought to be the last word on the lips of a dying Christian. Therefore the priest tells the dying Christian to say these words after him: "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." "Lord Jesus, accept my soul!"

The name "Christ," too, is a venerable and holy word. What are you?—You are Christians. To be a Christian is a very great honor and dignity. A Christian is also an Anointed of the Lord; consequently a little Christ. When did you receive that anointing?—But have you always lived like a little Christ?—Give honor to your name! Live like another Christ, otherwise you are not at all worthy of the name Christian.

2. The Son of God became man out of purest love for us. Our holy Mother, the Church, reminds us of this truth three times each day at the ringing of the Angelus-bell. Thrice each day we ought to turn our thoughts to this great mystery of the Incarnation, and to say each time with the proper reverence these words: "And the Word was made flesh!" What do these words mean?—And three times each day we ought to thank God for this great blessing. We ought to thank the Father, for He has given us His Son out

of purest love. "God hath so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (John iii, 16). We ought to thank the Son, for He out of purest love has become a man for our sakes. We ought to thank the Holy Spirit, for the Son of God became a man by the power of the Holy Ghost.

3. The Incarnation of the Son of God took place over 1900 years ago. But every day in our churches the Incarnation takes place again, to be sure in a wonderful and mysterious manner. It happens on the altar during the Consecration of the Mass. Then the Son of God descends again from Heaven to earth and takes on flesh and blood in the Sacred Host and the Sacred Chalice. But why does He do this?—Jesus does this in order that He may be in our midst always in the Tabernacle on the altar. What great love! How humble Jesus is in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist! He has not even the form and shape of a man, but lies hidden beneath the appearances of bread and wine. Dear children, you, too, ought to humble yourselves before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Especially during the Consecration of the Mass say to Jesus in deepest reverence: "O Jesus! for Thee I live; O Jesus! for Thee I die; O Jesus! to Thee I belong in life and in death."

LESSON XVIII.

Jesus Christ—The God Man.

Catechetical Unit:

1) How many natures are there in Jesus Christ? L. VII, Q. 65.
2) Why is Jesus Christ true God? L. VII, Q. 63.
3) Was Jesus Christ always God? L. VII, Q. 67.
4) Why is Jesus Christ true man? L. VII, Q. 64.
5) Was Jesus Christ always man? L. VII, Q. 68.
6) Is Jesus Christ more than one person? L. VII, Q. 66.

Preparation. Dear children, Jesus Christ is the promised Redeemer, whom God sent to save us from sin. Let us review this teaching. *(Question the children briefly on the preceding lesson.)*—St. Augustine tells us, that Jesus Christ always conducted Himself in such a way, that He showed that He was God and man at the same time. For instance, Jesus as man was born into this world at Bethlehem, as God the angels of Heaven adored Him. As man He received gifts from the three wise men from the distant East, as God He received the adoration of these same visitors. As man at the age of twelve years He went to the temple of Jerusalem, as God He astonished the priests in the temple by His words of heavenly wisdom. As man Jesus fasted and was hungry, as God the angels of Heaven came and ministered unto Him. As man He said: "The Father is greater than I" (John xiv, 28), as God He said: "I and the Father are one" (John x, 30).

Aim. Today I am going to show you, dear children, why Jesus Christ is true God and at the same time true man.

Presentation. One day Our Blessed Saviour was visiting in a little city called Capharnaum, on the shore of the Lake of Galilee. This little town was dear to the Saviour's heart. He had spent the whole day preaching to the people. When evening came, they brought many people to Him, that were troubled by evil spirits. And Jesus drove out these wicked spirits and healed the sick. When the Saviour saw the great crowd of people before Him, He commanded His disciples to take Him across the lake in a boat that was nearby. He entered into the boat and rode across the lake with His disciples. The Lord was tired from the labors of the day. He lay down in the boat and soon fell asleep. While the disciples were busy rowing, suddenly a great wind storm arose. The waves dashed into the boat. It was beginning to sink. The disciples became alarmed at the danger and believed that their last hour was come. Realizing their danger, they went

to Jesus and awakened Him, crying out in fear: "Lord, help us or we perish!" But Jesus said: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?"—Then standing up in the boat, He commanded the wind and the sea: "Be quiet!" And at once a great calm and silence reigned on the surface of the sea. When the people, who were in the other boats, saw what had happened, they were filled with wonder and astonishment. "Who is this," they said to one another, "that the wind and the sea obey Him?" (Mat. viii). *(Show the children a large picture of this scene).*

Explanation. 1. a) We, too, dear children, wish to ask the question: "Who is Christ?" The stilling of the storm on the lake of Galilee gives us the answer to this question. Jesus was tired and fell asleep in the little boat. Does this surprise you?—How could Jesus become tired?—Jesus is a man just as you and I are. If I have to speak a long time in the school or preach a long time in the church, I become tired. So, too, Jesus grew tired from His long preaching. From this you can see that Jesus is a man; that He has a human nature like us. But immediately afterwards Jesus showed that He was more than a man. How do we know that?—By a Divine command of power Jesus ordered the storm and the sea to be quiet. If I were to call out to the storm raging outdoors: "Wind, be quiet!" do you think that it would obey me?—But with Jesus a word only was required, and at once there was a great calm on the lake. Therefore Jesus is more than a man; He is God too; He has a Divine Nature. Our Catechism says: **In Jesus Christ there are two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

b) We know this also from other things that Jesus did while on earth. After He had finished His sermon, the people brought to Him many persons who were sick and troubled by evil spirits. Jesus looked at these poor creatures and heard their piteous prayer:

"Thou great Wonderworker, have mercy on us! Help us and make us well again!" When we see a sick person, we feel sympathy towards him. So too, Jesus felt sympathy towards these unfortunates; their misery touched His heart with pity. Here again you see, that Jesus was a man like ourselves; that He had a human nature like us. We often would like to help a sick person; but we ourselves are only poor weak men. We cannot do everything. But Jesus is God Almighty. How do we know that?—By one word He cured all the sick and those possessed by the evil spirits. He did not have to use medicine. His word was enough to cure every disease, even the most dreadful and the most deadly illness. Here again you see, that Jesus is more than a man; that He is God; that He has a Divine Nature.

c) Let us take another example! Jesus once stood before the grave of His dear friend, Lazarus. The Lord was overcome with grief and He began to weep. Then He ordered that the stone be removed from before the opening of the grave. He called out with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth!" And immediately the dead man arose from the tomb and came forth. Is not that remarkable? Jesus weeps! Why does He weep? —He is a man as we are and has a sympathetic heart. He loves Lazarus and weeps out of love and sympathy. Therefore some of the bystanders said: "See, how He loved him!" But then Jesus called Lazarus from the grave back to life. How is such a thing possible?— Because Jesus is God Almighty; because He has a Divine Nature.—When the Christ Child lay in the crib at Bethlehem, He was weak and helpless and cried like other children; but later on when He stood on Mt. Thabor, He was transfigured. His garments became white as the snow; His face shone like the sun. Then He let us see a ray of His Divinity. In the manger we see the human nature of Jesus; on Mt. Thabor we see the Divine Nature of the Saviour. *(Repeat the answer as above).*

2. Yes, Jesus Christ is God. We know that from the wonderful deeds that He performed. But He is God for another reason. Just before the Redeemer was born into this world, th angel of the Lord announced the glad tidings to Mary, that God, the Father, was about to send His own Son to save us from sin and Hell. You remember the words of the angel Gabriel: "The Holy One that shall be born from thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i, 35). Again after Jesus was baptized by St. John in the Jordan river, the Father Himself gave this testimony concerning Jesus: "This is My well beloved Son, in Whom I am always well pleased" (Mat. iii, 17; xii, 5). That is the second reason why Jesus is God. **Jesus Christ is true God, because He is the true and only Son of God, the Father.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But I have a difficulty to solve. Could not the angel Gabriel say to every Christian mother: "Thy child will be called the Son of God?"—Dear children, it is indeed true, that in Holy Baptism every child becomes a child of God, but only a child of God by grace. When a child loses its parents by death, it is taken in or adopted by strangers. Such a child is not the real, the natural, child of these people, but only their child by kindness, by grace, by adoption. For these people have taken that child as one of their own out of pure kindness, or grace. They have adopted that child. Now God has taken us all as His children out of the purest kindness or grace. He has adopted us as His children. Therefore we are the children of God by grace, by adoption, not by nature. For by nature we are only children of nature. But Jesus Christ is a child of God, not indeed by grace or adoption only. He is God's Son from all eternity. *(Repeat the answer above under number 2).* You see, therefore, that there is a world of difference between the Christ Child and every other child.

3. Dear children, in the lesson on the Blessed Trinity you learned that there are three Divine Persons in God. Who are they?—Are the three Divine Persons

equal to one another in all things?—Is the Father from all eternity?—Is the Son from all eternity?—Is the Holy Ghost from all eternity?—Who is God the Son?—Jesus Christ is, therefore, God from all eternity just as God, the Father, and as God, the Holy Ghost. He did not first become God, so that at some time or other He was not God. No, long before the first day and the first second of time, long before the sun and the earth were created, Jesus Christ was God. There was never a single moment of time, when Jesus was not God. That is the reason why Jesus said to the Jews: "Before Abraham was, I am." When Jesus said these words, Abraham was dead at least two thousand years. Jesus is eternal, for He is God. Our Catechism says: **Jesus Christ was always God, as He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, equal to the Father from all eternity.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. The Son of God, Who is true God from all eternity, became a man; was born into this world as a little child from the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Mother. Therefore we say: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." When Mary and Joseph looked at the Redeemer lying in the manger of Bethlehem, they saw a little child with a body like other children. He did not merely look like a man; He did not merely have what looked like a body. Jesus had a true body of flesh and blood like ours; He had a human body and a human soul. He had everything that belonged to a man—a body with all its members, a soul with understanding, free will and the other powers. His *body* developed and grew like the body of other men. We see Him as an infant in the crib at Bethlehem, as a boy in the temple of Jerusalem, as a young man in the workshop at Nazareth, as a full grown man in the streets of Jerusalem and on the cross. Jesus felt the needs of the body like other men. He was hungry, thirsty, weak and tired, sleepy. He endured sufferings in His body—the bloody sweat, the cruel scourging, the crowning with thorns, the crucifixion. He died.

Jesus' *soul,* too, developed like the soul of other men. He was sorrowful in His soul in the Garden of Olives; He wept over the sinful city of Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus. "He increased in wisdom" (Luke ii, 25) as He increased in age. Of course, Jesus was always wise, all wise from all eternity, for He is not only man, but also God. But His wisdom and grace showed itself only gradually as He grew in years, just as the rosebud gradually unfolds itself until it becomes the full blown rose. Jesus' soul finally left His body, when He died on the cross. **Jesus Christ is true man, because He is the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary and has a body and a soul like ours.** *(Repeat together use the blackboard.)* That is the reason why Jesus loved to call Himself "the son of man." He, the Son of God, took a true body from Mary, His Mother, and became a man as we are men. Therefore St. Paul says of Jesus: "He took the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man" (Philip. ii, 7).

5. Jesus took this body and this soul of man, when the Holy Ghost came down upon Mary at Nazareth on Annunciation day—at the time of the Incarnation. Therefore our Catechism says: **Jesus Christ was not always man, but became man at the time of His Incarnation.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* Now we can understand better the meaning of the mystery of the Incarnation. Christ was the Son of God, the Father, from all eternity. He had the Nature of God, the Divine Nature from all eternity. In time He came down from Heaven to earth and became a man. He received His human nature, the nature of man, from His Mother Mary. Therefore Mary is the Mother of God. After the Incarnation Jesus Christ was true God and true man, or as we say—Jesus Christ is the God Man. That is what the angel said to Mary: "The Holy One that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The angel meant to say: "Thy

child will be a child of man and the Son of God at the same time."

6. Dear children, the story of Jesus in the boat on the lake of Galilee calming the storm by the mere power of His word shows us that He is true God and true man; that He has two natures—the human and the Divine Nature. Now be careful. Is Jesus, therefore, two persons?—Are there two persons in Jesus Christ?—The God Christ, who has the Divine Nature and the man Christ, who has the human nature?—Are there two Christs: one, who is invisible, almighty, eternal, etc., and another Christ, who is visible, a weak little child, born in time?—No, there is only one Jesus Christ. One and the same Jesus Christ is God and at the same time man; almighty in His Divine Nature and at the same time a weak child in His human nature. He is only one Person, who has two natures. **Jesus Christ is but one Person.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the Son of God long before He became a man. He is a Person (the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity) from all eternity; a Person, who has the Divine Nature, who is God. Therefore, Jesus Christ is a Divine Person. He added the human nature to the Divine Nature, which He already possessed from all eternity. But that did not make Him another Person. He remained the same Person that He always was. He was a Divine Person. He is, therefore, still a Divine Person, but a Divine Person who, besides the Divine Nature has taken another nature, the nature of man, human nature. Consequently Jesus Christ is not a human Person, but a Divine Person. Our Catechism says: **Jesus Christ is not more than one Person; He is but one Divine Person.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Write on the blackboard:

Jesus Christ
1. Has a Divine and a human nature.
2. True *God*—the Son of God, the Father.
3. Always God—the Second Person of the Bl. Trinity—equal to the Father in all things.
4. True *man*—Son of the Bl. Virgin Mary--has a body and a soul like ours.
5. Became man at the Incarnation.
6. One *Divine Person.*

Synthesis. Now let us suppose that Jesus Christ is standing before us in His body just as He appeared to His disciples at the calming of the wind and the storm on the lake of Galilee. What would you be able to see in Him? Jesus Christ is a true man as we are. But what else would you believe of Jesus Christ? You could indeed see His human nature, but His Divine Nature is veiled and hidden from our eyes. How do you know that Jesus is true God? What do you call Jesus Christ, because He is God and man? How many natures are there in Jesus Christ? From whom did Jesus get His Divine Nature? Was Jesus always God? From whom did Jesus get His human nature? When did He become man? What is the Blessed Virgin Mary called? Why? Is Jesus Christ more than one Person? What kind of a Person is He? Why? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. Jesus Christ is true God. Therefore we must adore His human nature. That is the reason why we adore His Most Sacred Heart, His Sacred Face, His Glorious Wounds, etc. But may we adore a man? Is it not idolatry to adore a mere man? We do not adore a mere man, but Christ—the God Man. We adore God in Him, God in man, in human form, in the garment of human nature. Our adoration is directed to God, but to God, who appeared in a human body as

in a garment. A person commits idolatry when he adores a mere creature but not when he adores God. A person is not guilty of idolatry, when he adores God, who has appeared under the form of man. Consequently in our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus we say: "O! Adorable Heart of Jesus"; or in the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus we pray: "Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us"! It is not the heart of a mere man, but the Heart of Jesus, the God Man, that we adore. That is to say, we adore God, who with a human form has also a human heart and uses it with His whole body as a garment to be visible to us and to dwell amongst us. Do we adore the heart of Mary? No, for Mary is only a creature, not the God Man. Say after me with true devotion: "Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us"!

2. Where is the God Man now? As God Jesus once came down from Heaven to earth; as God and man He returned again to Heaven. As God Man Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. As God Man Christ will return to earth again to judge the living and the dead. Now we believe in the God Man, as once the Apostles believed. Then we shall see Him face to face. On that day it will be as it was on the storm tossed sea of Galilee. Jesus arose in the boat: one word, one sign—and a solemn silence reigned. So, too, at some time or other all nature will be in a mighty storm. But then Christ will speak His mighty word of power over all the people: "Come, ye blessed of My Father"! and "Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire"!

3. But where else is Jesus, the God Man? He dwells in the midst of us, for He lives in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. To be sure, we do not see either His Divine Nature or His human nature. For the God Man is hidden beneath the appearances of bread and wine. He wants to remain with us, in order to be our food and drink unto eternal life. Through the Blessed Eucharist Jesus plants the seed of everlasting life in

our hearts. Holy Communion is the pledge of our future resurrection and eternal happiness. After Holy Communion we are, therefore, Bearers of Christ. We can say: "I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me"! How great is not the love of Jesus for us! Have you not at least a spark of love for Jesus?

Let us now sing a hymn in honor of Jesus Christ, the God Man, present in the Holy Eucharist.

LESSON XIX.

Jesus Christ—The Way, the Truth and the Life.

Catechetical Unit:

1) How long did Christ live on earth? L. VII, Q. 76.
2) Why did Christ live so long on earth? L. VII, Q. 77.

(N. B. Since the children are already familiar with the life of Jesus, the catechist may content himself with a brief recapitulation of the chief events of the Saviour's life on earth).

Preparation. Dear children, the Redeemer of the world, Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, is God and man at the same time. He has two natures. *(Question the children briefly on the preceding lesson.)* St. Francis of Assisi recognized in every little animal a creature of God, Our Heavenly Father. God made every little insect; it is His work. Therefore St. Francis loved all little animals so much, that he called them his little brothers and sisters. If he happened to find a little worm in the street, he would pick it up carefully and carry it to a place of safety, so that it might not be trodden upon. Many people admired the saint on account of this great love for all the creatures of God; but many others laughed at him and ridiculed him. What would you say, if Francis himself were to become a little worm, if such a thing were possible, in order to save a

worm?—Dear children, you could not even imagine a love as great as that! And yet, God, the Son, has shown a far greater love than that. For what is the most learned and the mightiest man of this world in comparison with Almighty God?—Far less indeed than the most insignificant worm, that crawls on the earth. And yet, God, the Son, became a man, in order that He might save us from sin and Hell and show us the way to Heaven. What boundless love of Jesus! He found us wandering about this earth like strangers, who had lost the way; like travelers, who did not know the dangers and pitfalls that surrounded them on every side. He not only pointed out the way, the right way, but He Himself went with us the entire way. Nay more, He even went ahead to point out the way to eternal life.

Aim. Today I am going to ask you to consider the life of Jesus on earth, so that you might understand better why He lived so long in our midst.

Presentation. Once there lived in Siena, Italy, a certain holy young man, named Peter, who had a beautiful vision. It was night. He thought that he was standing in a great church, the floor of which was covered with dust and many little rough and sharp stones. Suddenly the heavy door at the entrance to the church was thrown open and some one entered. Peter looked to see who had come in, and he saw that it was Our Blessed Saviour Himself. The Lord appeared as a poor man, suffering great pain from the wounds in His hands and feet and side. He walked slowly and with difficulty over the rough and sharp stones, until He came to the altar. Peter noticed that the Lord had left the prints of His feet on the floor. Yes, the blood, which had run down from Jesus' wounds, covered the floor of the church.

When the Saviour reached the altar, He sat down on a beautiful throne, all bright and shining like the sun at noontime. Soon afterwards another person entered the church. It was Jesus' most holy Mother, Mary. She

walked exactly in the footprints of her Divine Son. When she came to the altar, Jesus received her with great love and kindness and placed her on a throne at His right side. Then others came into the church: they were the holy Apostles and the Martyrs. After these came many other people of every nation, and state of life—kings, princes, poor men and women and little children. All took care to walk in the footsteps of the Divine Master. When they reached the altar, they too, were received kindly by Jesus, Who, after embracing them one by one, made them all sit down beside Him on thrones of light and glory.

Soon afterwards, as Peter was gazing at the beautiful sight in the sanctuary of that church, suddenly the vision disappeared, and he awoke. "It is not very difficult," he said to himself, "to understand the meaning of this vision. If I wish to reach Heaven, I, too, must take care to walk in the footsteps of the Saviour, just as Our Blessed Lady, and the Apostles, and the Saints have done. And Oh! what a long and painful journey that was for Jesus during those three and thirty years from Bethlehem to Egypt, and from Nazareth to Jerusalem, through Galilee and Judea! What a holy life Jesus led! What poverty He endured, and what sufferings He took upon Himself, and what trials, and over such rough ways! I must follow in His footsteps. Perhaps I too must suffer and endure all sorts of trials; but that matters not, if only I can reach the sanctuary of Heaven and obtain a place there, in the happy company of Jesus and His Saints!"

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, that was a beautiful vision that Peter was permitted to see in his sleep. What did he say, when he awoke?—"If I wish to get to Heaven, I too must follow in Jesus' footsteps just as Mary and the Saints have done." O! what a wonderful life the God Man lived on earth. That life began in the manger of Bethlehem and ended on the cross on Calvary. Scarcely had Jesus been born, when He was obliged to flee into distant Egypt, in order to escape

death at the hands of the cruel King Herod. After Herod's death, the parents of the Divine Infant brought Him to Nazareth, in Galilee, where He lived a quiet and **hidden life**, until He was thirty years of age. Only once, namely when He was twelve years old, did the Christ Child leave the hidden life at Nazareth, and show to the world that He was more than a man—that He was filled with the Wisdom of God Himself. You know the occasion. It occurred in the great temple of Jerusalem, when He taught in the midst of the Doctors of the Law. During all this time, from His twelfth to His thirtieth year, Jesus led a humble, obedient and holy life with His parents in the little home at Nazareth. *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

When the Christ Child attained His thirtieth year, He left that quiet home and appeared before the people. He began His **public life**. For three years Jesus preached to the people and worked miracles in their midst. Dear children, these are the thoughts that came into the mind of that holy young man, as he meditated on the beautiful vision he had seen in the sanctuary. *(Use the blackboard; see diagram below).* **Christ lived on earth about thirty-three years.** *(Repeat together).*

b) That holy young man, Peter, began to think more deeply of Jesus' life and the more he considered it the more beautiful and lovely it appeared to him. Why even Jesus' most bitter enemies had to acknowledge that He was without sin. Once He challenged them openly and in a most solemn manner saying: "Which of you will convince Me of sin?" (John viii, 46). And what did they reply?—They remained silent, for they could not bring forward even the smallest sin against Him, even though they had followed Him everywhere like spies trying to catch Him doing wrong. Even the betrayer of the Lord, Judas, said to the chief priests and ancients of the people: "I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matthew xxvii, 4). Yes, Jesus was free from

every sin. Our Catechism says: **Jesus led a most holy life.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

The God Man was not only without sin; He was also the most perfect model of every virtue. How lovely is not Jesus in His meekness and humility! The disciples were often like children. They were filled with envy of one another and began to quarrel, because each one wanted to be the first. Our Blessed Saviour did not scold them for their lack of charity. He only said: "So long I have been with you, and you do not understand Me yet?" How mildly He spoke to them in the garden of Olives. "What! could you not watch one hour with Me?"

How kind the Lord Jesus was to the unfaithful Peter! Only a sad look of love—that is the whole punishment Jesus had in store for Peter's awful sin. Yes, even His betrayer, Judas, Jesus addressed kindly: "Friend! why art thou come hither?" And then think of the bitter sufferings of Jesus! His enemies heaped all sorts of insults upon Him, and without a word of complaint Jesus bore them all. Yes, Jesus could say in all truth: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart!"

Dear children, recall Jesus' love for the poor sinner. Like a king the Saviour enters Jerusalem on Palm-Sunday. From the Mount of Olives He looks over the Holy City. Suddenly He begins to weep. Jesus weeps! O, how touching are not those tears! But why does He weep? Love and compassion for us poor sinners force those tears from His eyes. Yes, the Lord had such a good heart! He was full of love for sinful man. Therefore He did good to all. Like the farmer casting out his seed, so Jesus went about scattering His goodness and kindness everywhere.

But the love of Jesus for His enemies is even more astonishing. The Jews persecuted Him without interruption; said false things about Him; did all sorts of evil against Him; finally they nailed Him to the cross. Did Jesus revenge Himself upon them?—Dying He

even prayed for them: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!" How touching is not this love of Jesus for His enemies! And all that Jesus did, because His heavenly Father wanted it. "He was obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross," says St. Paul (Philip. ii, 8.) Yes, Jesus was the most perfect model of every virtue; He was full of love for men, even for His most bitter enemies; He was obedient unto death to His heavenly Father. Now you can understand better the meaning of those words: **Jesus led a most holy life.**

c) Jesus is the King of heaven and earth. Countless angels bow down before His throne in Heaven. But while He was on earth, He lived as the son of a poor carpenter, who had to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow. He was so poor, that He could say in all truth: "The foxes have their holes, and the birds of the air their nests, but the son of man hath not whereon to lay His head" (Matt. viii, 20.) The soldiers stripped Jesus of His garments and left Him to die in nakedness on the cross. He did not even have His own grave. Yes, Jesus was poor indeed. **Jesus led a most holy life in poverty.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

d) Finally that holy young man, Peter, thought of the bloody footsteps of Jesus and his thoughts went back to the bloody sweat of the God Man in the garden of Olives, to the cruel scourging, to the insults His enemies heaped upon Him, to the betrayal by Judas, to the denial by Peter, to the painful crowning with thorns, to the sorrowful way of the cross, to the crucifixion. Then falling down upon his knees before the crucifix, this pious young man wept over the sufferings and death of Jesus. **Jesus led a most holy life in poverty and sufferings.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2 a.) Dear children, let us look again at the vision which Peter saw in the sanctuary. He saw the bloody footsteps of the Saviour on the floor of the church. He noticed how Blessed Mary and the Saints of God were very careful to walk in these same footsteps and finally

he saw Jesus place them all on beautiful thrones beside Him. Then Peter said to himself: "Yes, I know what all this means. Jesus went ahead of me to show me the way to Heaven." Our Blessed Saviour Himself said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John xiv, 6.) Again He said: "Learn of Me" (Matt. xi, 29).

Jesus went about through the towns and the villages preaching in the synagogues and public places, by the wayside, everywhere. He spoke with so much sweetness, that the people followed Him in crowds wherever He went. He calls Himself "the light of the world," and thus He compares Himself with the dear sun in the heavens. What blessings of light and warmth does not this queen of the day bring to all the world! So, too, Jesus' teachings produce infinite blessings and graces in the hearts of men. But what did Jesus teach?—Was it perhaps art and science?—No, only what was necessary for us and of value for eternity. He taught us how to get to Heaven. That is the reason why He lived so long on earth. **Christ lived so long on earth to show us the way to Heaven.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But Christ is dead. How then do we know the teachings of Jesus? We know them through the Church, which He instituted and which teaches us these very same truths today, that Jesus Himself spoke to the people over nineteen hundred years ago. Dear children, always listen attentively and reverently to the voice of Holy Mother Church speaking to us in Jesus' name.

b) Jesus showed us the way to Heaven not only by His teachings. Just think of the bloody footsteps of the Saviour in the dust of the sanctuary floor. Yes, Jesus went ahead of us and showed us how to walk in the path to eternal life. That is the second reason why He lived so long on earth. **Christ lived so long on earth to show us the way to Heaven by His example also.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Do you want to know how He taught us by His example to get to Heaven?—Well then just listen to these stories.

1. Look at the little Infant Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger of Bethlehem. The great God, how little He has become! The mighty God, how weak He has become! He has chosen a stable for His birthplace. Yes, Jesus in His Divine Infancy teaches us to be **humble.** *(Use the blackboard.)* Dear children, the Saints of God call humility "the foundation of all the virtues," and the reason is this. Without humility all the other virtues would fade away or fall to pieces like a house, no matter how beautiful it may be, unless it is built on a solid foundation. Never be proud, but rather acknowledge your own unworthiness, weakness, and sinfulness, and look upon all good as coming from God. In other words, dear children, always be humble in the sight of God. That is the surest way to Heaven.

2. Look at the Boy Christ at the age of twelve years in the temple at Jerusalem. He is there to adore His heavenly Father and to glorify Him. See how zealous Jesus is for the honor of God. For three days He remains there praying and speaking with the Doctors of the Law about God and heavenly things. Yes, Jesus in His Divine Childhood teaches us the lesson of **withdrawing our hearts from the things of the world and living always with God.** *(Use the blackboard.)* Dear children, you too, must raise your thoughts to God every day of your life, even in your childhood, and never cease to please the great God.

3. Look at the Boy Jesus at Nazareth; look at Christ as a Young Man, as a Full-grown Man in the home of His parents. Concerning all this time, from His twelfth to His thirtieth year, we find only these few words in the Bible: "And Jesus went down with them (Joseph and Mary) to Nazareth and was subject to them." Few words indeed, but so full of meaning for all young people! Jesus Himself, although the true and

only Son of God, "was obedient" to His parents during all those long years. Thus again He gave us an example that as He did you and all children must do. Yes, Jesus in His private, hidden life teaches us **obedience.** *(Use the blackboard.)* Of all the virtues God is pleased most of all with this beautiful virtue. Obedience is the virtue that brings us, even in this life, peace of heart and happiness. Woe to the disobedient sons and daughters when they will have to stand before the throne of Him, Who, while living in our midst, practised obedience with such joy and zeal.

4. Look at Jesus during the three years of His public life as He preaches and performs miracles, as "He goes about doing good" to all. Thereby He showed us not by words only, but by His example, how to reach the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus in His public life teaches us to be **meek.** *(Use the blackboard.)* The virtue of meekness is the principal virtue He proposes for our imitation and He esteems it so highly, that He promises the Kingdom of Heaven in a special manner to all that practise it for love of Him. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." Dear children, put down all desire of revenge, and any motion of unjust anger and displeasure for the love of Jesus. Be meek.

5. Finally look at the sufferings, which the Saviour endured throughout His entire life on earth, but especially during His bitter Passion in Holy Week. How patiently He bore them all! Jesus in His suffering life teaches us how to **bear our cross.** He shows us that the royal road to Heaven is through suffering, for love of Him, in patience all the crosses and trials of this short life, because it is His Holy Will. *(Use the blackboard.)* If you keep before your eyes all that Jesus said and did during His Passion, it will be easy for you to bear patiently all the evils that come upon you. Remember the words of Christ: "If you wish to be My disciples, take up your cross and follow Me."

You see, therefore, what our Catechism means, when it says, that Jesus taught us the way to Heaven not by his teachings only, but also by His example.

Write on the blackboard:

1. Christ lived on earth:
   a) a *hidden* life—30 years;
   b) a *public* life — 3 years;

   33 years.

   Christ led a *holy* life—without sin—the example of every virtue; a life of *poverty* and *sufferings.*
2. Christ showed us the way to Heaven:
   a) by His *teachings;*
   b) by His *example*—humility, union with God, obedience, meekness, patience in trials and crosses.

Synthesis. The life of the God Man on earth is a most beautiful life. How long did He live on earth? How many years did He spend in the hidden life? in the public life? What kind of a life did He live? How do you know that His life was holy? Why did He live so long on earth? How does He show us the way to Heaven? What virtues did Jesus teach us by His example? In His Infancy? In His Boyhood? In His hidden life at Nazareth? In His public life? In His suffering life? Now open your Catechism and read the answers. *(Assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. Jesus spent the greater part of His life on earth in the quiet home at Nazareth away from the busy, noisy world. He was scarcely known outside the immediate circle of His relatives and acquaintances. He did not make a great stir in the world until He began His public life. He obeyed His parents for the greater part of His earthly life. He assisted His foster-father in the workshop and spent His time in prayer and the service of God. What an example for all of us. "Learn of Me" He says to all men. Yes, thousands of men, women and young people from every

nation and country and state of life have left the world with all its honors, pleasures and riches. They have joined some religious order or society, where they live day after day in poverty, sufferings, obedience and labor in the closest union with Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life. Of course, the unbelieving world calls these persons fools, but in the sight of God they are truly wise. They are walking closely in the footsteps of the Saviour day by day; they are waiting patiently for Jesus to call them out of this vale of tears into the happiness of the heavenly court. What an example the religious are to us all! What an honor to belong to these chosen orders or societies! Perhaps when you grow older, Jesus will call you to become a religious. Pray often to Jesus, in order that He may let you know whether He wants you to follow Him in that more perfect life—the religious life.

2. It is indeed a great honor for us men, that the Son of God Himself has wished to become a man. The angels are more perfect than we are, but God did not become an angel. He was made a man and dwelt amongst us. We rejoice over this fact and we should, therefore, become like to Jesus. As the Child Jesus lived, so we ought to live. The Son of God became a man, in order to show us how to become holy and pleasing to God. As a little boy of twelve years Jesus went to the temple to pray and adore God. He wanted to teach us, that we too should love to pray and visit Jesus in the House of the Lord. When you come to the church, you ought to be devout and prayerful; you ought not to look around or page through your prayerbook in a distracted manner. That is not the way to act in God's holy temple. You ought to fold your hands in a devout manner. Look at the Tabernacle and tell Jesus what you need. Ask Him to make you holy, obedient, truthful, humble children. Do not disturb your companions at their prayers. Examine your consciences: Did you ever misbehave in church? Did you ever disturb your companions at their prayers?

3. Jesus obeyed His parents until He became a full grown man. He helped them as a good son by running errands for them, by assisting St. Joseph in the workshop and by supporting them by the work of His hands. If you wish to please Jesus, you must obey your parents faithfully and try to help them as much as possible. How do you act at home? Are you mean and saucy to your dear parents? Did you ever make them sad by your wicked conduct? Dear children, if you imitate Jesus now as children, you will most probably follow His example as men and women. You know, that if you wish a tree to grow straight and upright, you brace it against a stick or support, so that it cannot become deformed. Lean on Jesus in your childhood by imitating His example faithfully, and when you grow up into men and women, you will be a credit to the Church and to your country.

LESSON XX.

The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What did Jesus Christ suffer? L. VIII, Q. 78.
2) On what day did Christ die? L. VIII, Q. 79.
3) Where did Christ die? L. VIII, Q. 81.
4) How did Christ die? L. VIII, Q. 82.
5) Why do you call that day "good," on which Christ died so sorrowful a death? L. VIII, Q. 80.

Preparation. Dear children, the Saviour lived a long time on earth and led a most beautiful life, as we learned in the last lesson. Let us see how much you remember of this lesson. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson.)* The fourth article of the Apostles' Creed says: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried." This article tells us in a few words of the many sufferings that Jesus endured for our sakes. When did Jesus' sufferings

begin? His entire life on earth was one great suffering. The Christ Child was born in poverty; a stable in the midst of a bitter cold winter was His first house; a manger His little bed. Soon afterwards a cruel king threatened the tender little Infant with death; therefore the Holy Family had to flee in haste into a distant, strange land. Then Jesus grew up to be a boy, a young man, a full-grown man in the little village of Nazareth. But there was not a single day without its sufferings, no joys without their corresponding sorrows. Do you know why? Jesus foresaw all His sufferings long before they happened; everything appeared before His eyes as though all had already taken place. Just suppose that a person is about to be put to death. The executioners bring in the instruments that are to be used in the execution. What anguish that person must feel, when he looks at the instruments and thinks of all that is about to take place! So Jesus saw all His sufferings in advance. Consequently He lived in continual dread of death. That fear grew day by day, the nearer the time of His Passion approached. The Saviour's sufferings grew more sharp, when He appeared in public before the Jews. Hard work, poverty, shameful ingratitude became, as it were, His daily bread. Yes, Jesus endured unspeakable sufferings all through His earthly life. But all this was only a preparation, a prelude, to that terrible drama at the end of His life—the Way of the Cross that led to Calvary. Some of these sufferings, that the Son of God endured for our sakes, are mentioned briefly in a prayer, which you all know; namely in the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Holy Rosary.

Aim. Let us today, dear children, consider the story of the Sufferings and the Death of Jesus, the Saviour of the world.

Presentation and Explanation. 1. a) The night of the Lord's bitter Passion had come. Jesus gathered His beloved disciples around Him for the last time. He wanted to leave them a remembrance of His love

and His Passion, a memento so great and wonderful, that no man could ever have imagined such a thing possible. What do I mean? Jesus gave Himself to His disciples and to us in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Then He arose and went outside the city of Jerusalem, into the Garden of Olives. There He said to His disciples: "Remain here, while I go yonder and pray." He took Peter, James and John with Him and began to grow sad and to tremble and be afraid. "My soul is sorrowful unto death," He said to them; "remain here and watch with Me." Then He went forward a little further into the garden and fell down upon the ground beneath the olive trees. His face was deadly pale and His breath became heavy. Raising His clasped hands towards Heaven, He heaved deep sighs from His sorrowfilled breast. Yes, the sweat like drops of blood poured forth from the pores of His body and ran down in little streamlets over His pale face. It was the death fear that caused the blood to flow. The Saviour foresaw all the terrible tortures, that were to come upon Him—the scourge, the crown of thorns, the cross. He beheld clearly the countless sins and crimes that men had committed from the beginning of the world, and all the sins and wickedness that men will commit to the end of time. They appeared like a mighty mountain that reached into the heavens. And all those sins and wickedness were placed on His shoulders. Oh! what an awful load to bear. He saw all the souls that would be lost in spite of His Sacred Passion and Death. All this is what caused Him bitterness of soul and sorrow that pierced His Sacred Heart like a sharp sword. More than that. His best friends, whom He loved as no friend ever loved a friend, as no mother ever loved a child, all abandoned and deserted Him in His sorrows and sufferings. They had no word of consolation to offer; no not one. They were asleep. They could not watch a single hour with Him; they who but a short while ago had solemnly promised that they would go with Him to battle and to death! How all that pressed

down upon Jesus' soul like a cruel weight and made the blood flow from his Sacred Body! That was Jesus' first great sorrow. **Jesus Christ suffered a bloody sweat.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis; show the children a large picture of this scene).*

b) After Jesus had been arrested in the Garden of Olives, He was condemned to death by the High Priests, insulted and tortured the whole night by the Jews. Then they handed Him over to the heathen judge, Pontius Pilate. This pagan, although he knew that Jesus was innocent, ordered that He be scourged. The soldiers stripped the Saviour of His garments. Oh! how ashamed Jesus must have felt to be obliged to stand there naked before the gaze of so many eyes. The soldiers bound Him to a stone pillar so tightly that the ropes cut deeply into His flesh. Then they beat Him with whips of leather (scourges.) Oh! most cruel torments. The soldiers beat him until they became tired; then others took their places and continued the torture. The leather thongs of the scourges tore the tender skin of Jesus' Body and the iron hooks at the end of the leather straps penetrated into the flesh even to the bones and tore out whole pieces of the flesh. Soon the Sacred Body of the God Man was one great wound and covered all over with blood. Oh! what pain that must have caused Him. How His Sacred Heart must have called out to Heaven and His eyes have looked up to His Father above and pleaded with Him! **Jesus Christ was scourged.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; show a large picture of this event).*

c) The soldiers untied Jesus after His cruel scourging, but instead of showing Him mercy, they planned new torments. They remembered having heard that Jesus once said: "I am King of the Jews!" Now then they wished to ridicule Him. Kings at solemn functions wear magnificent mantles (in the olden days the mantels were purple); they also wear a crown on their heads and carry a rod or scepter in their hands. The

soldiers, therefore, threw an old worn out purple cloak or mantle of some soldier around Jesus' shoulders, placed a reed in His hands and a crown of thorns on His Sacred Head. They then treated Him as a fool king; bent their knees before Him in mockery; pretended that they wished to kiss Him, and then spat into His face. All that caused new sufferings to Him. The thorns were strong and pointed like sharp nails. They penetrated into His head. The blood flowed down into His eyes and mouth. The hair of His head was all wet with blood. Then these heartless torturers struck the crown of thorns with a rod, so that the sharp points went deeply into His head. Oh! dear Saviour, what awful sufferings you must have endured on that occasion. **Jesus Christ was crowned with thorns.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; show a large picture of this scene).*

d) The executioners led Jesus out of the city to the place of execution, which was about one mile from the court of Pontius Pilate. Oh! what a bitter journey that must have been for Jesus as He walked the Way of the Cross, falling frequently upon the hard ground. At last they arrived at the top of the hill, called Calvary. The soldiers tore Jesus' garments from His Sacred Body. If you cut yourselves and bind up the wound, Oh! how it pains you, when some one tears off the bandages, even though the greatest care be taken. But remember that the Saviour was all covered with wounds from head to foot; His garments were caught fast in the wounds and the blood. What sufferings it must have caused the Redeemer, as the rough soldiers pulled the clothing from His Body with great force; All the wounds were opened anew. Then they nailed Him hand and foot to the cross. Raising the cross, they let it fall into a hole prepared for it. **Jesus Christ was crucified.** *.(Repeat together; use the blackboard; show the children a large picture of this scene).*

2, 3, 4. It was about noon on Good Friday that Jesus was nailed to the cross. He hung suspended be-

tween heaven and earth for about three hours on the top of a little hill called Golgotha. It was called Golgotha, because its shape was like a huge human skull. Another name for this place is Mount Calvary. Here it was customary to put criminals to death. Golgotha or Calvary was, therefore, the place of execution. Look at the Saviour as He hangs upon the cross! Try to realize the awful sufferings He must have endured during those long and bitter hours of Good Friday. Did you ever have a severe toothache?—That hurts you severely, does it not?—The pain is due sometimes to the fact, that in the tooth there is a cavity or a hole and the nerve (which is like a fine thread in the center of the tooth) is exposed to the cold air. Now there are such nerves, not only in the teeth, but in other parts of the body. What terrible pains Jesus must have suffered, when the soldiers struck the big, blunt nails through Jesus' hands and feet, so that the nerves were torn apart, the bones crushed! What awful agony the Saviour must have felt during those three long and bitter hours on the cross! The worm, that is stepped upon, can at least move and wriggle; but the Saviour could not move, for He was nailed hand and foot to the cross. If He tried to move, the nails would tear more deeply into His Sacred Flesh. If He attempted to rest His Head against the cross, He would strike upon the painful crown of thorns.

On either side of the Innocent Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, there were two thieves and murderers fastened to crosses as He was. Oh! what an insult to place the great God, Who is Holiness Itself, in the same company with wicked criminals. The cruel nails bored deeply into Jesus' hands and feet, but the biting scorn and the awful blasphemy of Jesus' executioners hurt Him more than the nails and the thorny crown. No martyr ever suffered even one hundredth part of the pains and the sorrows that Jesus endured during His Passion. He was sunk in a sea of bitterness. He felt as though God Himself had deserted Him. Sorrow sur-

rounded His Soul like black storm clouds so that in His agony, He cried out: "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—Yes, now we can understand the words of the Prophet concerning the suffering Messias: "Oh! all ye that pass by the way attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow" (Lamentations of Jeremias i, 12). And again the Prophet says: "The sorrows of death surround Me" (Psalm xvii, 6.) The Son of God, glorified and honored by the angels of Heaven, hangs here as though He were the greatest sinner that the world has ever seen. Yes, Jesus is buried in a grave of sorrows and torments.

After having hung on the cross for three hours, Jesus cried out with a loud voice: "It is consummated!" that is, "The work of redemption is finished—the time of suffering is over!" "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit!"—Then He bowed His head and died. When then did Jesus die?—**Christ died on Good Friday.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* Where did He die?—**Christ died on Mount Calvary.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* How did He die?—**Christ was nailed to the cross and died on it between two thieves.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; show the children a large picture of the Crucifixion).*

5. a) Dear children, Jesus suffered these cruel torments and death on Good Friday. But does it not seem strange to call that day "good," on which Christ died so sorrowful a death?—Let us try to understand the reason why it is called by this name. Look at the Saviour on the cross. He is growing weaker and weaker. His thirst is so intense that He can scarcely utter a word. His tongue cleaved to the roof of His mouth. He hears the insults and the taunts of the Jews and the soldiers at the foot of the cross. He sees the hatred of Hell in their eyes. And yet, He does not become angry; He does not curse them. No, His dying lips move in prayer for His enemies. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"—that is the prayer Jesus sends up to His heavenly Father. Can

you imagine a greater love?—He loves men to the end —to the very limit of love—to His very last breath. "Greater love than this no man has, that a man give up his life for his friends" (St. John xv, 13.) Jesus gave His life, not for His friends only, but for His most bitter enemies. Now you can understand the answer of the Catechism: **We call that day "good" on which Christ died, because by His death He showed His great love for man.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) But there is another reason. Jesus by His sufferings and death rescued us from the chains and the dungeon of Hell; by His Sacred Passion He blotted out the stain of sin from the hearts of men; by His cruel torments and death Jesus turned the curse of God into a blessing; clothed our nakedness with the glorious garment of sanctifying grace; opened the gates of Heaven for all and brought us every blessing. **We call that day "good" on which Christ died, because by His death He purchased every blessing for man.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Christ suffered { a bloody sweat; was scourged; was crowned with thorns; was crucified.
2. Christ died—on Good Friday—between two thieves.
3. Good Friday—called "good," because on that day:
   a) Jesus showed His great *love* for us;
   b) Jesus *purchased* every blessing for us.

Synthesis. We have been considering the fourth article of the Creed. What is the fourth article of the Creed? In what prayer do we recall Jesus' sufferings and death? Recite the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary. What did Jesus suffer in the Garden of Olives? Why did Jesus suffer a bloody sweat? What other sufferings did He endure? On what day

did the Saviour die? Where did He die? What is another name for Mount Calvary? How far is it from Pontius Pilate's court? Why do you call the day on which Christ died "good?" *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Our Blessed Saviour endured sufferings of the body and sorrows of the soul all through His earthly life, but especially during the last few days before His death. The Church commemorates the details of Jesus' Passion in the devotion of the Stations of the Cross. The Way of the Cross, as it is also called, owes its origin to the Mother of God, who often used to walk in the footsteps of her dear Son to Calvary, pausing at the spots marked by some special incident in the Passion of Jesus. The early Christians flocked in crowds to the holy places, in order to follow the Way of the Cross. But when, in the Middle Ages, the Holy Land fell into the hands of the infidels, and the devout pilgrims could no longer visit the scenes of Our Lord's Passion except at the risk of their lives, the stations were erected in the churches and enriched by the Popes with many indulgences. St. Francis of Assisi did a great deal to spread this devotion among the Faithful.

The Way of the Cross is the name given to the fourteen stations, which represent the way along which Our Blessed Redeemer passed, bearing His cross, from Pilate's palace to Calvary. The fourteen stations consist of fourteen wooden crosses, to which pictures and inscriptions are generally attached. They are erected in churches and chapels, sometimes also in the open air on the side of a hill, and occasionally also in the cemeteries.

To make the stations of the cross it is necessary to go from one station to the other in turn, meanwhile meditating on or thinking seriously of Our Lord's Passion and Death. If the priest or some other person makes the stations of the cross with the people, it is not necessary that all go from station to station.

All that is required in that case, is that one stands up and kneels down as every station is being made. If you are prevented from making the stations, on account of sickness or the great distance from the church, you can gain all the indulgences by reciting the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory be to the Father, etc., twenty times, that is, fourteen times for the fourteen stations; five times in honor of the Five Wounds of Our Saviour and once for the Holy Father's intention. However, meanwhile it is necessary, that you hold in your hands a crucifix blessed for the stations. *(Show a crucifix to which such a blessing is attached).*

You can gain the same indulgences by making the Stations of the Cross as you would gain, if you were to visit the corresponding places in the Holy Land. Dear children, resolve to make the Way of the Cross frequently and devoutly, and you may rest assured that you will obtain true contrition for your sins and be incited to practise virtue in imitation of Jesus, the Suffering Saviour.

2. Jesus died on Good Friday. We commemorate most holy mysteries on that day. The Church puts on her mourning on Good Friday. No joyous tones are heard; only sad words and hymns that move our hearts to sorrow for sin, to sympathy for Jesus. No bells are rung—not even the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated on that day; for the Church lays aside everything except what may lead us to sympathize with Jesus, and excite in us contrition for our sins, which have nailed Jesus to the cross.

Christians keep every Friday holy in remembrance of Jesus' death. Because the Lord did so much penance on Good Friday, Christians too wish to do penance, to be sure, not as much as the Lord, but some penance in imitation of Him. Therefore, they do not eat meat on Fridays, so that the Saviour may see that they are grateful for all that He did. Friday is a day of abstinence from flesh meat.

LESSON XXI.

The Redemption Through Jesus Christ.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Why did Jesus Christ suffer and die? L. VIII, Q. 83.

2) Which are the chief effects of the Redemption? L. X, Q. 102.

3) What lessons do we learn from the sufferings and death of Christ? L. VIII, Q. 84.

Preparation. Dear children, we have accompanied Our Blessed Saviour over the Way of His sufferings from the Garden of Olives to Mt. Calvary. There is no path in all the world so full of woe, so wet with tears, so stained with blood. Let us review briefly the story of Jesus' sufferings and death. *(Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson.)* The way of the cross became for us the way of salvation, the path that leads to Heaven. For Jesus has suffered all for our sakes. This is indeed a mystery, so great and wonderful, that we can never understand it fully. Jesus Christ, God's own Son, has died for us out of the purest love and pity! O, yes, on the cross we see the infinite love of Jesus for sinners.

Aim. Today I am going to explain this mystery a little more in detail: Jesus suffered and died for us sinners and by His Passion and Death brought countless blessings to us all.

Presentation. The first sin had been committed. Men had despised God's commands and, therefore, they have had to endure God's punishments. Adam and Eve might weep and repent and pray; they could not undo the sin they had committed; neither could they satisfy God any longer, for their sin was too great.

The angels of Heaven saw that. Filled with pity they said to one another: "Alas! just look at the poor men of earth. How the image of God is disfigured in their hearts! They have lost Heaven; they have lost

everything forever!" Then they went to the throne of God and began to pray: "Heavenly Father, have mercy on these poor men! We, Thy angels, wish to do penance for them. We will love Thee more; we will serve Thee more faithfully; we will adore Thee more zealously!" But God, the Father, answered: "You angels are indeed dear to Me; but you cannot satisfy for their sins! Men have committed sin: men, too, must do penance!"

The Son of God, too, saw the misery of sin and felt deep sympathy for poor mankind. Therefore He said "They shall not perish forever!" Then He approached the throne of the Father and said: "Father, I have pity on the poor men of earth. I will redeem them. I, Thy eternal Son, will descend upon earth and become a poor, little infant. I will live and suffer and die for men, that they may not die, but live forever!"

Touched by this great love the Father said: "My Son! be it done according to Thy word. That, too, is My holy will!" And God let the glad news be announced to our first parents: "The Saviour will come." In the fulness of time God's own Son appeared in the form of a man and lived and suffered and died for us the painful and shameful death of the cross. Then the Father said: "It is enough. I forgive all!" And from the Sacred Heart of the Son of God, opened by the spear thrust on the cross, the fountains of grace flowed again in streams into the hearts of men.

Explanation. 1, 2. a) Dear children, after the first sin had been committed, life upon this earth was unspeakably sad indeed. What would have been the fate of men?—No man could have obtained grace any more; no man could have been saved. Sin is the work of the devil. Therefore men had become the slaves of Satan: Hell was open to receive them. They had deserted God; therefore God rejected them from His sight. Heaven was closed against them. By sin men had offended God; had dishonored Him grievously. But God is just. And His justice demands that the offence which had been

offered Him be made good. But alas! nowhere could help be found; nowhere could hope be obtained. The angels saw the misery of sin, into which men had fallen, and the angels had pity for men. But why could they not help men?—Whoever commits sin, he it is, that must satisfy for sin. Therefore God said: "Men have sinned, and men must do penance for sin!" Even though an angel were to become a man and do penance for man, it would be all in vain. Do you know why?—If a man offends another man, it is wrong indeed; but he can set it right again. The one who offends another, needs only to please the one offended as much as he has displeased him; then it is enough—he has satisfied for his offence. But if a man offends God, he can never satisfy for his offence, for he can never do so much, that it will be enough in God's sight. Man is so little; God is so great and infinitely holy. Therefore sin, too, is an infinite offence in the sight of God. Even though man were to give up his life for God, the debt would not be paid in full. For man has nothing that he can give to God. Why, even man's life is a gift from God. The debt, that man contracts against God by sin, can be paid fully only by one who is as great as God Himself. Yes, only the Son of God could take away the curse of sin from men and reconcile them with God.

Now what no man and no angel would ever have dared to hope for, that the Son of God has done for us. What did He say to His heavenly Father?—"Father, I will become a man and I will die for men and shed My Blood for them. Forgive them for the sake of My Blood!" Yes, Jesus out of pure pity and love for sinful men became a man and wished to suffer and die, in order that we might live and be saved. He did so much by His sufferings and death, that it was enough in God's sight. He satisfied for our sins. He paid the debt in full for all mankind. **Jesus suffered and died for our sins.** *(Repeat together use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)* **By His sufferings and**

death Christ satisfied God's justice. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Jesus Himself told us this at the Last Supper. For on that occasion He said: "This is My Body, which will be given for you: This is My Blood, which will be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins." Do you see?—Jesus wished to shed His Blood for the forgiveness or remission of sins. St. Paul teaches the same truth in the words: "When as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v, 8, 9); and St. Peter (I Ep. i, 18, 19) says: "You were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold and silver, but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled."

In the first place Jesus had to satisfy the justice of the Father for the first sin committed by Adam and Eve; the sin, which we all inherited from them. I believe, that His sufferings and death were more than enough to pay for that offence. But how many sins have been committed since Adam's time! And how many more will yet be committed to the end of time! Just think of the many sins, which you yourselves have been guilty of! Were the sufferings and death of Jesus enough to pay for the sins of all men?—Yes, thanks be to God! And even though at the Last Judgment there had been thousands of times more sins than there actually have been committed—everyone is satisfied for, the entire debt of sin is paid in full. Yes, as St. Paul says: "Christ died for all men" (II Cor. v, 15), and St. John says so beautifully: "He (Jesus) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (I Ep. ii, 2). Dear children, just look at Jesus as He hangs on the cross with outstretched arms. It is as though He wished to say to all men: "All ye sinners, come to My Divine loving Heart! I wish to save you all!" O! what great value is attached to the sufferings and the death of the Redeemer. He is God's own Son and, therefore, whatever He does has an infinite value.

b) But there is another effect of the Redemption through Jesus Christ. He did not only suffer and die for our sins; He did not only satisfy the justice of God fully for the offences we committed against it. He did more than that. You know that a person may be free from prison and from punishment, and yet he may be with empty hands and empty pockets. Jesus Christ not only freed us from prison and punishment, from Hell and eternal punishment, but He gave back to us and to all men something that we all had lost by sin. He earned for us all a most precious treasure. Do you know what that treasure is?

Dear children, by our natural powers we cannot believe as we should, we cannot keep God's commandments faithfully, we cannot have the right kind of contrition for our sins, we cannot be saved. We need some help from Heaven, a far greater help than the natural powers of body and soul. We need a supernatural help from Heaven. This help is called Divine Grace. By sin Adam and Eve lost grace, not for themselves only, but for us and for all men. They and all their children, that have come into the world after them, were beggars in the sight of God, because of sin on their souls. All men had become "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" before the great God. They were powerless to do anything to please God. The Lord God turned away from them in detestation, for all men were without grace. Therefore the angels of Heaven said to one another: "Alas! just look at the poor men of earth. How the image of God is disfigured in their hearts! They have lost Heaven forever!"

Then Jesus Christ, God's own Son, came from Heaven to earth and earned grace, not indeed for Himself, but for our first parents and for all their children. You know how hard a servant must work to earn his wages. So, too, Jesus earned grace for all men by dreadfully hard labor—by living all His life in humble obedience to His Father, by trying to please God, by enduring sufferings and death. The wages He received for all

this is Divine Grace. Jesus did not want this grace for Himself; He gave it to us as a present. He said to His heavenly Father, as it were: "Father, it is true, that men do not deserve to receive this grace from Thee, for they have not served Thee as they ought to have done. But see, I have served Thee faithfully all My life. Now look upon My life and My sufferings and My death on the cross as though men had done all this for Thee. I do not want any reward for Myself. Give the reward, Thy grace, to them!"

That is what Jesus said every moment of His earthly life. And when the soldier pierced Jesus' side with a lance as He hung upon the cross, the fountains of grace began to flow again in abundance. Whoever opens his heart, so that the streamlets of heavenly grace can flow into it, and makes good use of this grace, can be saved. That is the second effect of Jesus' sufferings and death. **By His sufferings and death Christ gained grace for men.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Yes, dear children, on the tree of the cross there have grown the most precious fruits, more precious indeed than anything in the world. Our Catechism says: **The chief effects of the Redemption are two: the satisfaction of God's justice by Christ's sufferings and death, and the gaining of grace for men.** *(Repeat together.)* O! what great value attaches to the sufferings and death of Jesus. He is God's own Son and, therefore, everything He does has infinite value.

3. The story of the bitter Passion and Death of Jesus Christ is enough to move the hardest heart to sympathy. The Saints of God loved to meditate on the sufferings of the Redeemer, and they wept as though their heart would break, when they thought of all that Jesus endured for our sakes. Oh! what a terrible evil sin must be, since it made the Saviour suffer such awful agony. How God must hate and detest sin, when He demanded that His own dear Son should shed His Blood in order to satisfy for sin! Nothing else would be enough to pay the debt in full, which we owed to the

justice of God. Nothing else would take away the deep, filthy stain of sin. Indeed so much does God hate even a single mortal sin, that all the good works which the Saints of God have performed, all the prayers which they have uttered, all their fastings, all their works of charity, were not enough to make up for the offence and the insult, which a single mortal sin gives to God. Not all the blood of the millions of martyrs, not all the love of the angels and the archangels, not all the good works of Mary, the Queen of the angels and the saints, God's own Mother, could satisfy God for one mortal sin. Just suppose that all the thousands of beautiful and shining stars that you see every night twinkling in the sky, were so many worlds, each one as large as this world on which we live; and suppose, that all those worlds were peopled by angels and saints who should have no other occupation during millions of years, but to weep and to lament at the foot of God's mercy seat for a single mortal sin,—well, those thousands of millions of angels and saints weeping and praying for a thousand millions of years could not remove the slightest stain of a single mortal sin. All their prayers, all their tears, when put in the balance of Divine Justice, opposite to mortal sin, would be of no more weight than a grain of sand in a balance against a mountain. Do you know the reason why?—The malice and the wickedness of mortal sin is infinite, and all the merits of the angels and the saints are finite and limited in their value.

Dear children, in order to satisfy for mortal sin, it was necessary that the Son of God should come from His bright throne in the Heavens; leave happiness, glory and majesty behind Him, and become a poor outcast in this world, and walk this sinful earth for thirty-three years in sufferings of all sorts, and finally die a death of torture and shame on a cross amidst the sneers and the derisions of a brutal crowd! Oh! the malice and the evil of mortal sin. Oh! how God must hate and detest it. What need there is for satisfying God's justice! From the sufferings and death of Christ we learn

the great evil of sin, the hatred God bears to it, and the necessity of satisfying for it. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

St. Catherine once said: "If a sea of fire were on one side and on the other side a single mortal sin, there is no person, who really understands what mortal sin is, who would not at once rush into the sea of fire rather than be united with such a frightful monster, mortal sin!" Oh! dear children, let nothing induce you to commit so frightful an offence as mortal sin. Suffer every pain, endure every torment, submit to every insult and wrong, sooner than fall into serious sin. If you have committed grievous sin, make an act of contrition with all your heart and ask Jesus to give satisfaction to God's justice by offering His Precious Blood for your sake to the Father.

Write on the blackboard:

1. Jesus suffered and died for our sins (the Redemption).
2. The chief effects of the Redemption—satisfaction of God's justice—gaining of grace.
3. From Jesus' sufferings and death we learn—the great evil of sin—the need of satisfying for sin —God's hatred for sin.

Synthesis. If Jesus Christ had not been born into the world and suffered and died for us, not one of us could have been saved. We owe all to Jesus Christ. Why did He suffer and die? In what words does He Himself tell us this truth? What does St. Paul say? What does St. Peter say about the price that the Redeemer paid for our sins? For what sins did Jesus suffer and die? What are the two chief effects of the Redemption? What lesson do we learn from the sufferings and death of Jesus? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Jesus satisfied God's justice for sin and earned grace for all men.—You have often heard

the priest say or sing the following words: "Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen"—that is, we pray to God "through Our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, Who livest and reignest in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen." Do you understand the meaning of these words?—They tell us of the satisfaction, which Christ has made to God for our sins and of the grace He has earned for us. All our labors and prayers receive their value solely from Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world. All the good we do is, as it were, dipped in the Precious Blood of the Saviour and, therefore, has value in the sight of God. There are many people, who are proud when they do something good. That is foolish pride. Without Jesus Christ there is no merit for Heaven! Never forget this truth.

2. Did you ever think of what you would be without Jesus?—After sin had been committed, Hell rejoiced and Heaven was sad. The devil had already prepared a place for you. But Christ freed you and me again from the power of Satan and Hell. Do you want to be so foolish as to fall again into the hands of the devil and be dragged into Hell?—If you commit a grievous sin, you really come under the power of Satan. And do you know also, that since your holy Baptism a drop of the Precious Blood of the Redeemer, as it were, clings to your immortal souls?—Do you want this Sacred Blood to be removed from your souls? Without that Blood your soul is worthless for Heaven. Do you know what you do, when you commit mortal sin? —I will tell you. Just look at Jesus hanging on the cross. The Jews did that to the Redeemer, and you are rightly angered at these murderers. But do you know that your sins do the very same thing to Jesus? —St. Paul says: "Whoever sins, crucifies again the Son of God" (Heb. vi, 6.) Yes, the person who commits mortal sin is a murderer of God. For such a per-

son murders Jesus in his soul! Do you want to have such a crime of blood on your souls?—No, never. Thank your dear Redeemer every day for having freed you from Hell by His Precious Blood and purchased your soul for Heaven.

3. St. Philip Benizi, when at the point of death, said: "Give me my book." "What book is it that you want?" asked some one standing by. The saint pointed to his crucifix, and said: "This is my book!" And after having kissed the crucifix devoutly, he breathed forth his soul to Jesus, his Redeemer. O! yes, the crucifix, that is, the loving meditation on the sufferings and death of Jesus, ought to be for you, too, dear children, your dearest book. What holy lessons can we not learn from the Passion and Death of the Redeemer! Now to show your love and gratitude for Jesus' sufferings and death, kiss this crucifix devoutly and promise Jesus never to offend Him by serious sin. *(Present a crucifix to the children and have them venerate it).*

LESSON XXII.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Whither did Christ's soul go after His death? L. VIII, Q. 85.

2) Did Christ's soul descend into the hell of the damned? L. VIII, Q. 86.

3) Why did Christ descend into Limbo? L. VIII, Q. 87.

4) Where was Christ's body while His soul was in Limbo? L. VIII, Q. 88.

5) On what day did Christ arise from the dead? L. VIII, Q. 89.

Preparation. Dear children, in the last lesson we considered the graces and blessings which have come to us through the Redemption. I am going to see how much

you remember of this lesson. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing matter.)*—Jesus died on Good Friday. He Himself had foretold what would happen after His death. Here are some of the prophecies that He spoke. Immediately before His sufferings, Jesus said to His disciples: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock Him, and spit upon Him, and scourge Him and kill Him: and on the third day He shall rise again" (Mark x, 33s.) Even before this the Saviour had said to the Jews: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii, 19.) Of course Jesus referred to His Sacred Body. After the wonderful transfiguration on Mount Thabor, the Redeemer said to His three chosen disciples: "Tell the vision to no man, till the son of man be risen from the dead" (Matt. xvii, 9).

The Prophets, too, had long before foretold the Resurrection of the Lord. Thus we read in the book of Psalms (xv, 10): "Thou wilt not leave my Soul in hell (in the grave); nor wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption." The Prophet Jonas is a type or figure of the Risen Saviour. For Jonas was in the whale's belly for three days, and then he came forth therefrom alive, as you remember from your Bible History. So too, Christ was in the grave for three days, and then He came forth alive and glorious. The fifth article of the Apostles' Creed tells us this truth in the words: "He descended into hell, and on the third day He arose again from the dead."

Aim. Today I am going to tell you about the great mystery of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Presentation. It was Good Friday about the ninth hour, that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon. The dying Saviour hung on the cross on Golgotha. With a loud voice He cried out: "It is consummated. Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." Then He bowed His head and died. His Soul descended into the prison,

called Limbo, where the souls of the good were, who had died since the sin of our first parents. The Redeemer told them that the Redemption was over and that soon they would be permitted to enter Heaven. They were, however, to wait forty days more. O! what joy must have filled their hearts, as they heard this glad news. They were freed from all anxiety by this happy news, and they were consoled. Jesus' Soul remained with them, until it returned again into His Sacred Body. *(Present a large picture of this event).*

Soon a rich and pious counsellor named Joseph of Arimathea, went to Pontius Pilate and begged boldly for the Body of Jesus. The Roman governor granted Joseph's request. Then Joseph took precious linens and went with Nicodemus to Mount Calvary. With holy reverence they removed the corpse of the Saviour from the cross, wrapped it tenderly in the linens and laid it in the lap of Mary. What a touching scene! What a sight for the Mother of Sorrows! Then the pious men took the Sacred Body of the Lord and carried it to the sepulchre. The holy women followed them. It was a second Way of the Cross for Mary! Carefully they closed the tomb and went home with heavy, sad hearts. But soon their sorrow was to be turned into gladness. *(Show the pupils a large picture of this scene).*

The High Priests and the Pharisees remembered very well, that Jesus had once said: "I will rise again in three days." Therefore they went to Pilate and said: "Let the grave be guarded, till the third day, lest His disciples come and steal the body and say to the people: He is risen from the dead." Pilate gave them guards and they sealed the grave.

The morning of the third day came. Jesus arose from the dead, and came forth from the sealed grave alive and shining in glory. His face was like the lightning and His garments were white as the snow. The earth quaked; for an angel of the Lord descended from Heaven. He approached the grave, rolled the stone

back and sat upon it. The guards were paralyzed with terror, and fell upon the ground like corpses. Scarcely had they recovered from their fright, when they fled away and told all Jerusalem what had happened at the grave. *(Present a large picture of this scene).*

Explanation. 1. That was a very impressive moment, when the dying Saviour called out with a loud voice: "It is consummated!" Like an echo from Heaven that cry was heard even in the depths of Hell.—Then Jesus bowed His head and died. His Soul left His Sacred Body. Where did it go?—The first part of the fifth article of the Creed gives us the answer: "He descended into hell." **After Christ's death His Soul descended into hell.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. Now let us look into this place called hell. It is still Advent there. Whom do we find there?—We see there thousands and thousands of Saints, all the just souls of the Old Testament—Adam and Eve, Abel, Noe, Abraham, Moses, David, the Prophets, Lazarus, Joseph too, the foster-father of Jesus. He surely must have told these pious souls many beautiful and wonderful things concerning Jesus; he must have consoled them very much. These pious souls, who had died before the Saviour came into the world, had repented for their sins, had kept God's commandments faithfully and had believed in the Redeemer to come. But why could they not go into Heaven?—Because Heaven was closed by the sin of our first parents, and could not be opened except by Christ, the Saviour. Hell was the place where these persons were waiting for the coming of the Redeemer.

The Holy Scriptures point out three places, which go by the name of "hell." 1. There is the "hell of the damned," which is often called Gehenna, or the abyss, or the bottomless pit, or hell fire. This is "Hell" properly so called. It is the deepest of all, and is at the greatest distance from Heaven. 2. There is another place called hell. It is the prison of "Purgatory,"

where the souls of those persons are confined, who have died in venial sin, or who have not fully satisfied for the temporal punishments due their sins. They are detained here until they are cleansed and purified from every stain and imperfection, and have fully satisfied for what they owe the Divine Justice, by "paying the last farthing." It is in this sense that the word hell is to be understood when, in the Mass for the dead, the Church prays to God to deliver the souls of the Faithful departed from the pains of hell. Thus in the Offertory of the Requiem Mass the priest says the prayer: "O Lord! King of glory, deliver the souls of all the Faithful departed from the pains of hell and the deep pit." 3. There is another place or state called hell, the prison of Limbo. It is into this last place, "Limbo," the place of rest and waiting, into which the Soul of Christ descended at His death. Our Catechism says: **The hell, into which Christ's Soul descended, was not the hell of the damned, but a place or state of rest called Limbo, where the souls of the just were waiting for Him.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Limbo is also called "Paradise," for it was of Limbo that Christ spoke when He said to the good thief on the cross to His right: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

3. In Limbo there was no suffering, but neither was there much joy. What do you think was the hardest thing that these souls had to bear in this prison?—They had an indescribable longing and yearning for God, a homesickness for Heaven. That was their sorrow and suffering. They knew, indeed, that they would finally go to Heaven and see God face to face. But Oh! if only that happy hour were at hand. Perhaps even while Jesus hung dying on the cross of Golgotha, these souls were praying again in holy yearning: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour" (Isaias xlv, 8).

Suddenly an angel of the Lord appears. "I announce

to you a great joy. Christ, the Saviour, is near!" Scarcely had that word been spoken, when Limbo became all bright with a wonderful, heavenly light. What is it?—Quickly as thought flies from earth to Heaven, Christ's Soul descends into Limbo. At once thousands and thousands of voices cry out: "Alleluja! Praise be to the Lord. Thanks be to the Lord. The Saviour is here!" Suddenly the prison of Limbo is changed into a heavenly Paradise. How do you know that?—Christ Himself had said to the good thief at His right side: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." But how could Limbo become Paradise?—The just souls in Limbo saw Jesus' glorified Soul and His Divinity. To see God—that is Heaven, that is Paradise. Therefore Limbo is no longer a place or state of sorrow, but is now a place or state of heavenly happiness and gladness. Surely the holy souls in Limbo must have said what St. Peter once said, when he saw the glorified Jesus on Mt. Thabor: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!" Christ freed the souls from Limbo. He took them with Him to earth on Easter morning. They formed His court, His body guard, as it were. Of course they could not be seen by bodily eyes, for they were spirits without a body. After forty days they were allowed to enter into Heaven gloriously and solemnly with the Saviour. **Christ descended into Limbo to preach to the souls who were in prison,—that is, to announce to them the joyful tidings of their redemption.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Jesus' Soul remained in Limbo, but His Sacred Body was still hanging on the cross. Jesus' Corpse, too, was a most precious sanctuary. Now after death it was no longer to be dishonored. Pious and holy men cared for this precious treasure. Tenderly they removed it from the cross, wrapped it in clean linens and placed it in the lap of Mary. Where have you already seen this beautiful and touching picture? We think of this scene at the thirteenth station of the cross: "Jesus is taken down from the cross and placed in the

arms of Mary, His Mother." Then the Corpse of Jesus was carried to the grave. It was evening of Good Friday. The fourteenth station of the cross tells us of this event. "The Sacred Body of Jesus is laid in the sepulchre." The grave was new and belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. Do you know how the graves of the Jews looked?—They were little caves in the side of the rock. If you were to enter into such a cavern, you would find two rooms or chambers: 1. an antechamber and 2. the inner chamber, where the graves were located. The graves were stone coffins. The corpse was placed into one of these stone coffins. Then the grave was closed by placing a large stone over the opening. *(Show a large picture of such a grave.)* The grave, into which Jesus was laid, was closed in that way. But besides this the grave was sealed, and guards were placed on watch. Why did the Jews take this precaution?—**While Christ's Soul was in Limbo, His Body was in the holy sepulchre.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Now the Jews said triumphantly: "Christ is dead! His disciples will soon disperse and the new religion will disappear from the face of the earth"! But they rejoiced too soon, as we shall presently see.

5. The Sacred Body of Jesus rested in the grave for three days. It was buried on Good Friday evening. That was the first day. It remained there all during Holy Saturday. That was the second day. And it was in the grave also at the beginning of Easter Sunday. That was the third day. As the day began to dawn on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death, Jesus' Soul left Limbo and was united again to His Sacred Body, now all bright and glorious and immortal. What happens when the soul enters again into a dead body? —The body becomes alive. So, too, Jesus' Body became alive and arose from the grave. **Christ arose from the dead, glorious and immortal, on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.) (Show a large picture of this scene).*

But tell me, dear children, how could Jesus come forth out of the closed grave?—The stone was untouched; only afterwards did an angel of the Lord remove the stone from the entrance to the grave. Well, you know that glass is solid and yet, the sun's rays pass through it. Yes, in our own days men have discovered rays of light that can go through (penetrate) even solid bodies (X-rays). That, of course, is only natural; that is not even a miracle. But when Jesus came forth from the grave on Easter Sunday, He performed the greatest miracle that the world has ever seen. No dead person can of his own power come forth alive from the grave. But it was easy for Jesus to come forth from the closed grave. "Nothing is hard or impossible for God." The Body of the Risen Saviour was a glorified Body. It was immortal and could no longer suffer or die. It shone like the sun; the Sacred Wounds sparkled like the twinkling stars. It was quick like thought, like the lightning. It was like a spirit and, therefore, not even the stone of the grave could hold it back.

But is it really true, that Jesus arose from the dead? —The soldiers spread the news throughout Jerusalem: "While we were asleep, His disciples came and stole the body." That was a bare faced lie. Who can show that this is so?—Before the sepulchre there was a large and heavy stone. It could not be removed without making a noise. And even suppose that the guards were asleep; how could they see the disciples steal the body?—If they really were asleep, they would have been punished severely for their carelessness. But we know that they were rewarded, not punished. And do you think that the disciples would have had the courage to steal the Corpse of the Saviour? Why, they were so fearful that they did not even venture out into the streets of Jerusalem. Moreover, they were ignorant, simple, but honorable men; they were not capable of committing such a great fraud. The Jewish priests did not want to believe at any cost; consequently they

allowed these lies to be spread broadcast among the people.

Dear children, if something wonderful takes place anywhere, the persons who are present when it takes place, who see it happen, can be called on to witness, can tell us what they saw and heard. Now it is true indeed, that at the greatest miracle of the history of the world, namely at the Resurrection of the Lord, the apostles and the disciples were not present. But they were present when Jesus died; when His Body was laid in the sepulchre; when He appeared to them after His Resurrection. Jesus showed Himself to His disciples five times on Easter Sunday, and at least five afterwards, as the Bible tells us. They saw Jesus with their own eyes; they spoke to Him; they touched Him; they ate with Him. And all this occurred not once only, but during forty days and at least five hundred people were present at one time. Later on the disciples of Jesus allowed themselves to be tortured most cruelly and even to be put to death for this same faith in Jesus' Resurrection from the grave. Surely, such men are witnesses, whom one can trust fully. Rightly, therefore, do we pray and sing on Easter Sunday: "The Lord is arisen, Alleluja"!

Write on the blackboard:

1. After death Christ's *Soul* descended into Limbo.
2. Limbo—where the souls of the just were waiting for the Redeemer.
3. Christ announced the joyful tidings of the Redemption to the souls in Limbo.
4. His *Body* remained in the sepulchre.
5. Christ arose from the grave—on the third day after His death—Easter Sunday.

Synthesis. Jesus did wonderful things during His life, but the most wonderful things He did after His death.—He raised Himself from the grave by His own power. Let us review this briefly. What do the words

of the fifth aritcle of the Apostles' Creed mean: "He descended into hell"? Who was in hell? Why were they there? What is another word for hell? It it the hell of the damned? Is it Purgatory? Did the Soul or the Body of Jesus go into hell? Where was His Body meanwhile? What did Jesus do in Limbo? Did His Soul remain in Limbo? What happened on the third day after His death? What do we call this day? How do you know that the disciples of Jesus did not steal His Body? Did the apostles and the followers of Jesus see the Risen Saviour? How many times did He appear to them? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. What joy and happiness must have reigned in Limbo, when the Soul of Jesus visited the just, who were waiting for the coming of the Saviour! Jesus went there as King, to announce the coming of the kingdom He had won by His Passion and Death in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth, namely in Purgatory. He went there as Priest, to proclaim that by His Sacrifice on the cross He is the cause of salvation to the living and to the dead. He went there as Prophet, to announce the Redemption of the world. St. Peter tells us: "Being put to death in the flesh, He (Jesus) preached to those spirits that were in prison" (I Ep. iii, 18). We, too, dear children, ought frequently to go in spirit not indeed into hell, where Christ went, for that no longer exists, but rather into that other Hell, the Hell of the damned. For at St Bernard says so beautifully: "Descend during life into Hell, so that you may not have to descend into it after death"!

2. Doubtless you would like to know what became of the grave of Jesus. A great church is built over that sacred spot. It is called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the center of this church there is a little chapel. It is the place where the grave of Christ is to be found. First we come into a little antechamber, the chapel of the angel, as it is called. Then we enter

through a low and narrow opening into the chamber, where the grave of Christ lies. It is a very small room, just about large enough to contain four persons. What do we see there?—A stone bench covered with marble. It is here that the Sacred Body of the Saviour lay. Three pictures of the Risen Saviour hang from the wall and many little silver oil lamps like kindly little stars spread light through the darkness. Holy Mass is offered each day on the grave of the Saviour. Pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre imitate St. Paula of Rome, when she visited this sacred place. They kiss reverently the place where the Sacred Body of the Saviour rested after Its pains and sufferings. St. Paula, when receiving Holy Communion, used to think of the Holy Sepulchre and say devoutly: "O! Lord Jesus, Thy grave is so glorious, is hewn out of the new rock and no one has as yet been placed in it. Behold! how empty and barren this grave of my heart is. So often I have placed sin into this heart of mine. O! Jesus come and purify my heart, so that it may be made a worthy resting place for Thy Sacred Body." Dear children, imitate St. Paula when you approach the Table of the Lord in Holy Communion.

3. Jesus proclaimed under oath before the Sanhedrim of the Jews: "I am the Son of God"! But they would not believe. At His Resurrection from the dead Jesus showed them clearly that He was indeed the Son of God. Still they refused to believe. But we believe and rejoice: "Alleluja—Christ is arisen"! Jesus, the Risen Saviour, is an example for us all. When we die, our body is laid into the grave just as His once was placed in the sepulchre. But as Christ arose from the dead, so we, too, will one day arise. Beautiful and glorious as was the Body of the Risen Saviour, so too, our bodies will be , if we die as children of God. We believe that and we hope and we are glad. Alleluja! Dear children, sometimes when a person dies, his relatives and friends distribute little holy cards in sweet remembrance. I once saw a little holy

picture, on which was represented a young widow kneeling before the grave of her husband. Flowers covered the grave. At her side were a little girl of seven years of age and a boy about five years, her children. In the face and the bearing of these three persons deep sorrow could be seen, sorrow over the death of a dear husband and father. However, just before the three mourners stood the consoling figure of an angel of the Lord. He pointed to the Risen Saviour, Who appeared in the clouds of Heaven. Under the picture were printed the beautiful and comforting words: "He who has conquered death and Hell, will also pour balsam into your wounds"! O yes, Jesus' Resurrection is the sweetest consolation, the most powerful means of lessening the pains and the sorrows of life. Think of this, dear children, when dear parents, or dear brothers or sisters, or dear friends, are called away from this life. Pray zealously for their soul. Remain good and you, too, one day will arise from the grave in the resurrection of the just. Christ Himself, the Conqueror of death and the grave, has said so.

LESSON XXIII.

Jesus' Ascension into Heaven.

Catechetical Unit:

1) How long did Christ stay on earth after His Resurrection? L. VIII, Q. 90.

2) After Christ had remained forty days on earth, whither did He go? L. VIII, Q. 91.

3) Where is Christ in Heaven? L. VIII, Q. 92.

4) What do you mean by saying that Christ sits at the right hand of God? L. VIII, Q. 93.

Preparation. Dear children, after Jesus' battle and the shedding of His Blood and the sorrows of the Passion came His victory and His crown and His joys.

He arose gloriously from the grave. Let us review this briefly. *(Question the pupils on the preceding lesson.)* In the sixth article of the Apostles' Creed we pray: "He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty." The Saviour's Ascension into Heaven had been foretold by the Prophets of the Old Testament. For instance, King David once saw the Messias in prophetic vision and said of Him: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be lifted up, O ye eternal gates: and the King of glory shall enter in" (Psalm xxiii, 7). Again he said: "Sing to God, ye kingdoms of the earth: sing ye to the Lord: sing ye to God, Who mounteth above the heaven of heavens to the east" (Psalm lxvii, 33s). In these words David is speaking clearly of the Ascension of the Lord from earth into Heaven. But why does David say: "above the heaven of heavens"?—Because Christ has gone far above the heaven of the stars even into the invisible Heaven. Why does the Prophet say: "to the east"?—Because Christ ascended into Heaven from the Mount of Olives, which is situated to the east of Jerusalem.

Christ Himself foretold His Ascension into Heaven. On the night of His sufferings, while on the way to the Garden of Olives with His disciples, Jesus said to them: "I am come forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John xvi, 28.) After His resurrection Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalen. What command did He give to her?—He said to her: "Go to My brethren, and say to them: I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God" (John xx, 17.) Now let us see how these words were fulfilled.

Aim. Today I am going to ask you to consider Jesus as He ascends into Heaven; then we shall ask: Where is Christ now in Heaven?

Presentation. Jesus arose from the tomb glorious and immortal on Easter Sunday. On that very day and during forty days He gave the clearest proofs of His

resurrection. He had no sooner arisen than He appeared to Mary Magdalen under the form of a gardener. In the evening of the same day He appeared in the midst of His disciples, Thomas being absent, although the doors of the house, in which they were assembled, were barred and fastened. Jesus showed them His hands and His feet, and they were glad at seeing the Lord. That same day He appeared to two disciples on the way to a little village, called Emmaus. But they did not recognize Him until He broke bread with them at table. A week later the Risen Saviour appeared again to His disciples, while they were gathered in the same place in Jerusalem, Thomas being with them on this occasion. Jesus made the doubting Thomas look at His wounds and put his hand in the place of the wound in His side. On another occasion He appeared to seven disciples on the shore of the Lake of Genesareth, and made Peter the Chief Shepherd of His flock. "Feed My lambs: feed My sheep." Within forty days He appeared many times to His disciples; and to prove to them that He had real flesh and blood, the same as before His death on the cross, Jesus ate and drank with them, although He did not need any nourishment. St. Paul tells us, that Jesus was seen on one occasion by more than five hundred brethren.

During all these many apparitions Christ "instructed His Apostles" in the many duties they were to perform when He should have left them, telling them at one time that whatever they should bind or loose on earth, He would bind or loose in Heaven. At another time He commissioned them "to go and teach all nations," saying that He would be with them "all days even to the consummation of the world." He told them many other things about the Scriptures and the Church He had founded upon earth.

The fortieth day after Easter was come. The moment was at hand when Jesus wished to take leave of His disciples. They were all gathered about the Divine

Master. He gave them His last command: "Stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv, 49.) "John indeed baptized you with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts of the Ap. i, 5.) "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts of the Ap. i, 8).

Then Jesus led them out of the Holy City to the Mount of Olives. It was about noon. The little band of disciples arrived on the Mount. Then Jesus spread out His arms over His disciples and blessed them once more—it was the last time on earth. And while He blessed them, He was lifted up before their eyes. Higher and higher He ascended, until a shining cloud hid Him from their eyes.

Filled with longing His disciples looked towards their Divine Master. They could scarcely believe that their dear Lord had left them forever. While they were still looking into the heavens, suddenly two angels clothed in white garments stood before them and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up to Heaven? This Jesus, Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven" (Acts of the Ap. i, 11.) Then they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and gladness.

But in Heaven, too, there was great joy and glorious jubilation. The army of holy angels went forth to meet Jesus and led Him to the throne of His heavenly Father. But the Father gave to His Son the highest honor and said: "Son, sit Thou at My right hand!" Ever since that time Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God Almighty.

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, we know with certainty, that Jesus really arose from the grave. To whom did He appear first?—Mary Magdalen went early in the morning to the grave of Christ. She wept because she did not find the Body of the Lord. Then Our

Blessed Saviour appeared to her in the form of a gardener. Mary said to Him: "Sir, if thou hast taken Him thence, tell me where thou hast laid Him; and I will take Him away" (John xx, 15.) Jesus answered: "Mary!" At once she recognized Him and cried out: "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Master.) Immediately afterwards the Risen Saviour appeared also to the women, who had gone to the sepulchre, and said to them: "All hail!" And they took hold of His feet and adored Him (Matt. xxviii, 9.) To whom else did Jesus appear?—Did the two disciples on the way to Emmaus recognize Jesus at once?—To whom else did He show Himself?—What words did Jesus say to His disciples gathered together in the room at Jerusalem?—Was Thomas present on that occasion?—The other disciples said to Thomas later: "We have seen the Lord"; but Thomas refused to believe. Eight days after Easter Jesus appeared again to His disciples in the same room in Jerusalem. How did Thomas become convinced that Jesus had really risen from the dead?—At another time the Apostles were fishing on the Lake of Genesareth. Then Jesus appeared suddenly on the shore. By the power of His word they made a wonderful catch of fishes. Jesus then gave to St. Peter the office of Chief Shepherd. What words did He say to Peter?—Yes, on another occasion five hundred disciples of the Master were assembled together. All of them saw the Risen Redeemer. Do you not see how often Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection?—Surely then no one can be in doubt any longer that Jesus is really arisen from the grave, for His disciples saw Him often, touched Him, ate with Him, conversed with Him. **Christ stayed on earth forty days after His resurrection to show that He was truly risen from the dead.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)*

b) But there is another reason why Jesus did not go to Heaven immediately after His resurrection. Each time that He appeared to His disciples He had a mess-

age for them. They were to take His place on earth and, therefore, they had to perform special duties. Jesus taught them carefully about these duties. He gave them also special powers, so that they could act in His name and by His authority. He bestowed upon them the power of forgiving sins. What words did He speak on that occasion?—He made St. Peter the Chief Shepherd of His flock. Tell me the words that He spoke on that occasion.—He opened the eyes of His disciples, so that they might be able to understand the meaning of the Holy Scriptures aright and promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who should teach them all truth. He spoke to them concerning the "kingdom of Heaven"—the Church (Acts of Ap. i, 3.) He taught them about the Holy Mass, the Sacraments and many other matters. That is the second reason why Jesus remained on earth forty days after His resurrection—**to instruct His Apostles.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. a) The fortieth day after Easter had arrived. Jesus took His disciples to the Mount of Olives, which is situated to the east of Jerusalem. Here a great miracle took place. After blessing His faithful followers, Jesus bid them a fond farewell and went up into Heaven with His Body and Soul, His Humanity and His Divinity. That must have been a wonderful sight! But tell me, how could Jesus soar up into the heavens like an eagle?—The Bible History tells us about the Prophet Elias, who went up towards the heavens in a fiery wagon or chariot and with fiery horses like a great storm wind. The Prophet Eliseus saw it with his own eyes, and called out: "My father, my father!" That, too, was a wonderful ascension into Heaven. But what is the difference between the ascension of Elias and that of Christ?—The great Prophet was taken up into Heaven by the power of God. Perhaps the Lord sent His angels, too. But Christ went into Heaven by His own power. Of course, the angels were present, too; but they did not have to help Jesus, for Jesus is

God. They only accompanied Him to the throne of the heavenly Father. **After forty days Christ ascended into Heaven.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Each year we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. Did you ever see a picture of the Assumption of Mary? —Mary stands upon a shining cloud and round about her are crowds of holy angels, who are carrying Mary to Heaven. Mary, too, did not go into Heaven by her own power, but was taken up (assumed) into Heaven by the power of Jesus and the assistance of the angels. Therefore when we recite the Holy Rosary, we make a distinction, for we say: "The Second Glorious Mystery—the *Ascension* of Christ into Heaven"; The Fourth Glorious Mystery—the *Assumption* of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven." The word "Assumption" means to be taken up; while the word "Ascension" means to go up by one's own power. Jesus went up into Heaven by His own power. He did this forty days after His resurrection, and **the day on which He ascended into Heaven is called Ascension day.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* Ascension Thursday is a holy day of obligation.

The Apostles looked after the ascending figure of their Divine Master with astonishment and wonder. If their eyes had been enlightened by a ray of heavenly light, they would have been able to see things far more wonderful. Jesus did not go into Heaven alone. The thousands and thousands of just souls, who had been detained in Limbo, were with Jesus as He ascended into Heaven and were permitted to join in His triumphant entry. They were His heavenly court, His kingly retinue, as it were. That certainly must have been a marvelous march of triumph. Then was fulfilled the word of the Prophet, who said: "He hath taken captivity captive" (Psalm lxvii, 19.) But the souls of the just gladly allowed themselves to be taken captive; for they were thereby permitted to enter into their eternal home. We all would like to have been present on that

occasion; for that would have been a sweet, a happy captivity.

3. Now let us look into Heaven. Accompanied by the hosts of the holy angels and the saints freed from Limbo, Jesus Christ approaches the throne of His heavenly Father. O! what a happy reception the Saviour obtained on that occasion. The Father now honors the Son in the sight of the entire heavenly court. What did the Father say?—"Son, sit Thou at My right hand!" At these words all the angels and saints fell down on their faces and adored Jesus. **In Heaven Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

4. Dear children, do you understand the meaning of those words: "Sit Thou at My right hand?"—When a king wishes to honor another king, he permits him to sit at his right; for the right hand or side is the place of honor. Thereby the king means to say: "I am king and you are king!" The heavenly Father allowed His Son to sit at His right hand. Thereby He meant to say: "I am God and Thou art God; Thou hast become a man; but Thou shalt also as man be equal to Me. What is Mine is Thine also: I give to Thee the whole power and the glory of My majesty!" **When I say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, I mean that Christ as God is equal to His Father in all things, and that as man He is in the highest place in Heaven.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Of course these words are not to be understood literally as meaning that Jesus Christ sits in Heaven as a king sits on his throne, or as we sit on seats arranged for our use. God, being a pure spirit, has neither hands nor feet, and consequently, has neither right nor left. The words, therefore, are to be understood in a figurative sense, that is to say, Jesus Christ, the God Man, is become the Lord and the Judge of the world; He may rule the world with His heavenly Father, and at some future time He may judge the world with His Father.

Yes, Jesus is now sitting "at the right hand" of His

heavenly Father, and so is fulfilled the prophecy of King David, which the Church recites each Sunday in the Vespers: "Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede a dextris meis" (Psalm cix, 1.)—"The Lord said to my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand." The Lord God, the eternal Father, said to my Lord, His Son, Who is God equally with Himself: Sit Thou on My right hand. How just and full of meaning is not that sentence of King David! What an honor is conferred upon Jesus Christ, the Messias, after the deep humiliation of the cross! As man on earth "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross. For which cause God hath also exalted Him, and hath given Him a name, which is above every other name. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in Heaven, on earth and under the earth. And every tongue should confess, that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of the Father" (Philip, ii, 10.) Yes, Jesus Christ, the Messias, is now raised far above the highest spirits of Heaven, for as St. Paul (Heb. i, 13) says: "To which of the angels hath God said: Sit thou at My right hand?" This is what we profess when we recite the words: "He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty!" Jesus Christ as God is equal to the Father in all things; as man He is in the highest place in Heaven.

Write on the blackboard:

1. After His resurrection Jesus remained forty days on earth—a) to prove that He was really risen; —b) to instruct His Apostles.
2. Forty days after Easter Jesus ascended into Heaven—Ascension Thursday.
3. Christ now sits at the right hand of the Father.
4. As God—equal to the Father in all things;—as man—occupies the highest place in Heaven.

Synthesis. What we have learned today is indeed beautiful and consoling for us Christians. Let us re-

view it briefly.—Did Jesus go into Heaven immediately after His resurrection? Why did He remain so long on earth? Tell me some of the apparitions of Jesus. What did Jesus teach His disciples during this period of forty days? What happened on the fortieth day after Easter? Whence did Jesus ascend into Heaven? Who went with Him? What difference is there between the Ascension of Jesus and the Assumption of Mary into Heaven? When did Jesus ascend into Heaven? In what words of the Apostles' Creed do we profess our Faith in this truth? Where is Jesus now in Heaven? What do the words mean: "Sitteth at the right hand of the Father?" *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Early on Holy Saturday morning the priest blesses the Easter candle. It signifies Christ, the Risen Saviour. Therefore the Church has ordered that five little wax nails be inserted into the candle. They represent the five wounds in the Sacred Body of the Saviour. The Easter candle remains in the sanctuary near the Gospel side of the altar for forty days. When we look at this candle we ought to think of the fact that Jesus remained on earth for the space of forty days after His resurrection. On the fortieth day after Easter we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord into Heaven. During the High Mass on that day, just after the singing of the Gospel, the Easter candle is extinguished. Do you know the meaning of this ceremony?—This ceremony reminds us of the fact that Jesus ascended into Heaven on the fortieth day after Easter. In Holy Mass just after the Ite Missa est, the priest blesses the people. At certain other times He blesses them with the monstrance or ostensorium containing the Blessed Sacrament. Both of these ceremonies ought to remind us of that moment, when Jesus extended His hands over His disciples on Ascension Thursday and blessed them and then ascended into Heaven.

2. There were only a few witnesses to Jesus' ascension into Heaven on Ascension Thursday. But there will be another ascension into Heaven—on the last day. Then all of us will be present; yes, we all may have a part in that ascension just as the holy souls from Limbo did. But if this is really to be so, we must now time and again make an acension into Heaven. How can we do that?—Ascend often now into Heaven, so that at death you may really ascend there. I mean: ascend now in thought into Heaven: there is your true and eternal home. The Church says to us every day in Holy Mass: "Sursum corda"—"Lift up your hearts." St. Ignatius, whenever thinking of Heaven, used to say: "O! how the earth and the world disgust me, when I think of Heaven." Whoever thinks of Heaven frequently during the day, will not cling to sin, because sin drags the soul downwards. Yes, let us live now as though we were already in Heaven, and we will surely one day ascend with Christ into Heaven.

3. How many blessings have come to us from Jesus seated on the right hand of His Father in Heaven! The Saviour ascended into Heaven, to make our Faith strong in all the teachings that He had announced while on earth. He is now seated "at the right hand" of His Father, to continue the great work of our redemption, by interceding with God for us. He is still our Prophet, King and Priest, our loving Friend, having our interests at heart, and desirous of nothing so much as that we should fill the seats which He has gone before us to prepare. In this world we are only strangers and pilgrims, passing through it for a few brief days. Heaven is our true home, and to that glorious home all our thoughts and words and deeds ought to be directed always. O! let us be ever mindful of our true home beyond the stars, whence Jesus looks down with love and kindness upon us, His dear children.

LESSON XXIV.

Christ Our Judge—The General Judgment.

Catechetical Unit:

1) When will Christ judge us? L. XXXVII, Q. 408 (second half).

2) What is the judgment called, which we have to undergo on the last day? L. XXXVII, Q. 409.

3) If everyone is judged immediately after death, what need is there of a General Judgment? L. XXXVII, Q. 416.

Preparation. Dear children, after Christ had completed the work of our redemption, He returned to His heavenly Father. He ascended into Heaven. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.)*—Jesus ascended into Heaven in the sight of His disciples. While they were looking upwards, suddenly two angels stood by them and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven" (Acts of Ap. i, 11.) Jesus Himself solemnly professed that before the Sanhedrim of the Jews: "I say to you, hereafter you shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of Heaven" (Matt. xxvi, 64.) When will that take place?—We even know what will happen at the end of the world, when all men will be judged, for Jesus Himself has foretold all.

Aim. Today we shall consider the return of Jesus for the judgment. In the seventh article of the Apostles' Creed we say: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." *(Write this article on the blackboard).*

Presentation. Dear children, listen to the words of Christ! After the Gospel of the Kingdom of God shall have been preached in all parts of the world, and to all the peoples of the world, the end will come. The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her

light, and the stars shall fall from the heavens, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved. On earth there shall be great distress among the nations by reason of the confusion of the sea and the roar of the waves. Men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. Then shall appear the sign of the son of man in the heavens; and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice: and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, and from the farthest parts of the heaven to the uttermost parts thereof.

When, therefore, the son of man shall come in His glory and all the angels with Him, He shall sit upon the throne of His glory. All the peoples of the earth shall be assembled before Him. But He shall separate them from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He shall place the sheep on His right, but the goats He shall gather on His left. Then shall the King say to them on His right: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, take possession of the kingdom, which I have prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Thereupon the King will say to them on His left: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." And the good shall enter into everlasting life, but the wicked into everlasting pain. Then shall all men see the Justice and Providence of God shine forth like the sun in the firmament after the darkness and the storm. *(Show the children a large picture of this scene).*

Explanation. 1. When will Christ come again to judge the living and the dead?—I should like very much to know that. Jesus once said: "The day and the hour no man knoweth, not even the angels of Heaven" (Matt. xxiv, 36.) But the Saviour speaks plainly of the signs, which will precede the end of the

world and the Last Judgment. Let us see what these signs are.

a) "The Gospel of the Kingdom of God will be preached in all parts of the world, and to all the peoples of the world." Nowadays there are Christians in all the countries and among all the peoples of the earth. But in spite of that only about one-third of mankind has become Christian; the other two-thirds is still in the darkness of paganism. You see, therefore, that the missionaries will have to work very hard and very zealously before they will have fulfilled the command of Christ: "Teach ye all nations!" Of course even then not all the pagans will have been converted, neither will all the Jews have believed in Jesus Christ.

b) "Signs will appear upon the heavens and on the earth." The world of the stars is like an immense clock of God. There everything goes along in perfect order. But at some future time, when the Judge of the world approaches, everything will be shaken tremendously. "The sun will be darkened, the moon will not shine, and the stars of the heavens will fall," that is to say, they will be thrown out of their fixed course. A great revolution will take place in the whole world. The earth, too, will be shaken by it. The sea struck by the power of a mighty storm will be tossed upon its shores with fearful roaring and thundering. The earth will quake. The firmament will wildly crash asunder. The elements will break their chains and cause a frightful uproar. Men will think that all Nature is dying. And all that will be doubly terrible, because the earth will be wrapped in complete darkness. Then, indeed, will men wither away like leaves by reason of the fear and the expectation of the things, that will come to pass on the earth.

c) Finally "the sign of the son of man will be visible." A great shining cross will appear on the heavens. For the good and just that will be a sign of consolation, but for the wicked a sign of terror.

2. At last He Himself will come, the Judge, Jesus

Christ, with great power and majesty. He will be surrounded by the choirs of the holy angels. His countenance will be wonderful; for it will be all glowing with the flame of glory that comes from His Divinity. Then will He send forth His angels. Mightily like the sound of a trumpet they will call into all the graves of men: "Awaken, awaken, ye dead! This is the resurrection for the judgment!" Quickly life will appear in all the graves, and the dead will come forth—some glorified as Christ was glorified on Easter morning: others ugly as the devils. All will have to appear at the judgment, the good and the bad; for it is the judgment of the whole world. **Christ will judge us on the last day.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Perhaps you are curious to know *where* Christ will come down from Heaven and hold court.—Christ ascended into Heaven from Mount Olivet. There, too, He will most probably appear again. The angels said that, when Jesus ascended into Heaven. "This Jesus will come again, as you have seen Him ascending into Heaven." There near the Mount of Olives, in the Valley of Josaphat (the Valley of the Brook Cedron), the peoples of the earth will most probably be assembled about Jesus, the Judge. (Cf. Joel iii, 2.) However, this is not a matter of Faith, for the Church has not defined this teaching.

3. The judgment begins. How will it take place?—Perhaps you imagine, that one after the other will be called before the judgment seat of Christ, and the Lord will pronounce the sentence over each one. No, that is no longer necessary; for that has already occurred at the particular judgment immediately after the death of each man. At the judgment at the end of the world all men will be judged together or in general. Consequently **the judgment, which all men will have to undergo on the last day, is called the General Judgment.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Even though all the men of the whole world will be

judged together at the General Judgment, still everything will be made mainifest to all the world. Men will be judged concerning all their thoughts, words and deeds, as well as concerning the omission of the good, which they ought to have done. *But how will that happen?*—Jesus did not tell us anything about that. However, this is how I think the judgment of the world will take place. Imagine that it is a dark night, and that you are standing on the top of a high mountain. You are looking out over the surrounding country. Everything is wrapped in a dense darkness. You are waiting for the sun to rise. Behold soon everything far and wide is flooded with a golden light. What you did not see before, is now plainly visible to your eyes. So too, it will be at the General Judgment. At first terrible darkness will cover the earth. Then Christ will appear—the heavenly sun. A most wonderful divine light will shine forth from Him. In a moment all men will be illumined through and through by this heavenly light, and everything will be revealed to our eyes. The wicked will stand there in terror, for presently all their sins will be visible on their bodies. Quickly they would like to wipe away the shameful stain. But alas! they cannot get rid of it. Their sins are burned into their very bodies, as it were, by the fire of Hell. But the good will appear clothed in the wonderful garment of grace. They do not need to feel ashamed over their sins; for all is forgiven.—Do you see?—Then everything will be brought to light. The General Judgment is like a little history of the world. The Saviour of the world has told us this. "Nothing is covered, that shall not be revealed; nor hid that shall not be revealed" (Matt. x, 26).

Then the end will come: the sentence will be spoken by the mouth of the Judge of the world. Christ will turn to those on His right and say: "Come, ye blessed of My Father! Possess the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" Then the Judge will turn to those on His left and say:

"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels!" That is the sentence.

Scarcely will that sentence have been spoken, when the Heavens will be opened, and the abyss of Hell will be opened. On the one side will be seen a glorious ascent into Heaven: on the other side an awful descent into Hell. Christ will precede, and the procession of the saints will follow, each one led by an angel guardian. Then will be heard an eternal "Alleluja! Holy God, we praise Thy name!" That is the beginning of eternal life. But to the left of the Judge Satan will precede, and after him will follow the procession of the lost souls. To be sure, the damned souls will try to resist; they do not want to go to Hell. But all is in vain. The wicked spirits will cast them forcibly into Hell, and there is eternal death.

Dear children, after the General Judgment Christ will lead the just with Him into Heaven, but the wicked He will cast into Hell. Then there will be no longer any Purgatory, but only Heaven and Hell.

4. You know that each man is judged immediately after his death. Why then will there be a General Judgment?—Some very strange things happen at times in this world of ours. Some people are subject to all sorts of trials and cares, while others enjoy a fullness of every blessing and good fortune. Here is a man, who scrapes and saves and toils day and night; and yet, he seems to accomplish little. Here in another person, who succeeds in everything he undertakes. Many a man will be tempted to say—of course, it is sinful to talk in that way—"I do not know why God should permit every evil to happen just to me. Is there no such thing as Divine Providence? Is there no just God in Heaven?" —Dear children, if you look at a map of some country or other, you will see a great number of strokes and lines. They are the rivers and the thoroughfares and the railroads. A little child, that does not understand, will perhaps imagine that it would be much better, if

all the strokes and the lines were straight. But you, who know better, will laugh at this and say: "You do not understand. It must be so, otherwise it would not be right." Yes, the life of man on earth is just like that map. There many paths cross one another in all directions, in a zig zag fashion. There is much poverty and sickness and bitter cares in every human life. A shortsighted, thoughtless person will indeed imagine, that it would be so much better, if things were different. What do you say to that?—"You talk like a little child. It must be so. The dear Lord sends that. He wants to lead every man to Heaven by His fatherly hand."

Here is a young man. A long and painful disease is eating away his life. His companions are healthy and happy, and are having a good time. But he lies forsaken in his little sickroom and sighs: "Oh, it is hard to be sick. Will it never be otherwise?"—But no. He does not get better; he must die. At the General Judgment it will be revealed why he had to die so young. If he had gotten well, he might have led a life of sin and might have been lost like so many of his companions. But now he has received a precious crown, nearly as beautiful as a martyr's crown. Will he still complain now?—O, no; a thousand times he will thank the dear Lord and say: "O God! I thank Thee for all these sufferings. Thou hast done all things well. How wise are Thy ways and Thy dealings with men!" **There is need of a General Judgment, though everyone is judged immediately after death, that the Providence of God, which, on earth, often permits the good to suffer and the wicked to prosper, may in the end appear just before all men.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Yes, dear children, it often happens that in this world the good are ridiculed and despised, and the wicked are honored and praised. But on the last day all this will be changed. "Many that are first shall be the last: and the last shall be the first" (Matt. xix, 30.) Indeed, I prefer now to be with those whom the world despises

and dishonors, if only I may be permitted on the last day to be among the just on the right of the Judge.

But there is another reason for the General Judgment, which our Catechism does not mention. There was a time, when Christ was humbled even to the dust of the earth. His enemies did every evil against Him. The word of the Prophet was indeed fulfilled in regard to Christ: "I am a worm, and no man" (Psalm xxi, 7.) But on the last day all that will be changed, for *Christ will be glorified before all the world.*—There are still many enemies of Christ in the world. They do not want to believe in Him; they are unwilling to adore Him. They persecute the Church of Christ and laugh at Jesus' followers. But there will be an end to all that some day. Those who do not believe that He is God will one day see Him, when He comes to judge the living and the dead. Those who do not love and adore Him as God, will have to appear before Him on the last day to be judged by Him.

Write on the blackboard:

1. Christ will judge all men on the last day—2. General Judgment.
3. Why is there a General Judgment?
   a) in order that the Providence of God may appear just before all the world;
   b) in order that Christ may be glorified before all the world.

Synthesis. In the Apostles' Creed you have often recited the words: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." But perhaps you do not realize the serious truths that are hidden beneath those simple words. Let us review them again briefly.—What signs will precede the end of the world? What will happen after the destruction of the world? How will Christ come? What will He do? When will Christ judge us? How will Christ come? What will He do? Where will the judgment

take place? What is that judgment called? What will Christ judge? How will all things be made visible? What sentence will Christ pass? What will He say to the good? to the wicked. Where will the good go? the wicked? Will there still be a Purgatory after the last judgment? If all men are judged immediately after death, what need is there of a General Judgment? What is another reason for the General Judgment? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. The Church calls the day of the General Judgment the "dies irae"—the "day of wrath or anger." In the Sequence of the Requiem Mass the priest recites, while the choir sings, that beautiful hymn called the Dies irae. That is indeed the correct name for that awful day. For then the wicked will feel the anger of the Lord. All men will see plainly that God is just. Twice each year the Church reminds us in a special manner of the day of wrath. On the very first day of the ecclesiastical year and again on the last day of the ecclesiastical year the Church reads for us in the Gospel the prophecy concerning the Judgment. The Church is a good, kind Mother, who is very solicitous for her children. She wants us to realize that the thought of the Judgment on the last day ought to be ever present to our minds. This thought should accompany you all the year like a guardian angel. St. Jerome once said: "I imagine that I hear even now the trumpet of the angel and the words: Jerome, come to judgment!" That is the reason why he became a saint. You too, can become saints, if you keep the scene of the General Judgment ever in your memory.

2. But perhaps some of you think: "O! the judgment is so very far off." Is that really so?—Christ is already in our midst—in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Now just imagine that suddenly the door of the Tabernacle opens, and a Sacred Host comes forth and becomes larger and larger like a great white cloud. And out of the cloud Christ comes forth. Fearfully great

and mighty He stands before you, with great power and majesty. And from the cemeteries the dead arise and approach the judgment-seat of the Saviour. Just imagine, that today is the General Judgment.—Could you say in truth to Jesus: "Lord, I am ready!" Yes, you are afraid and rightly so. And yet, you ought always to be prepared for that day of wrath and anger. For as a man lives, so he dies, and so he will be for all eternity.

3. In conclusion let me commend to you the words, which Our Blessed Saviour spoke to His disciples after having described the General Judgment: "Watch and pray!" "Watch!" so that you may not do that, which alone makes the judgment terrible for you, namely mortal sin. Never do evil, even when you are alone and no one sees you. The Divine Master is there and sees all. If ever you fall into serious sin, make an act of perfect contrition at once. But you must not only watch, you must also "pray." Only by continual prayer can you obtain the grace for a happy death and thereby obtain a merciful judgment. Therefore again: "Watch and pray always!"

LESSON XXV.

Christ Our Judge—The Particular Judgment.

Catechetical Unit:

1) When will Christ judge us? L. XXXVII, Q. 408 (first half).

2) What is the judgment called, which we have to undergo immediately after death? L. XXXVII, Q. 409.

3) Why does Christ judge men immediately after death? L. XXXVII, Q. 411.

4) What are the rewards or punishments for men's souls after the Particular Judgment? L. XXXVII, Q. 412.

Preparation. Dear children, Christ, Who now sitteth at the right hand of God in Heaven, will one day come to judge the living and the dead. Let us review this great truth. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.)*—In every large city there is a court, which passes judgment concerning the keeping or the breaking of the law. The judgment takes place in a large chamber, called the court-room. In the front of the court-room the judge sits before a beautiful desk, on which lies a large book containing the laws of the land, the punishments to be inflicted for the breaking of the laws, etc. The door of the court-room opens and the accused person is brought in. Judgment is to be passed upon him. He is accused of having robbed and murdered another person. The judge cites or calls upon witnesses, that is, persons who have seen the accused person commit these crimes, or who can prove that he is really guilty of these wicked deeds. Therefore the judge says: "It has been clearly proven that you are really guilty of these crimes. It has been shown without a doubt that you have done these things of which you are accused. To deny, to beg, to weep, is useless; for it is too late! You are old enough to know better. You knew what would happen to you if you committed these crimes. Oh! if only you had thought a little more seriously of all this. But now it is too late!" Then the judge passes sentence and the guilty person is led away to prison to receive the punishments due him for his evil deeds.

Dear children, that is how judgment is passed in earthly courts. So too, there is a court at which Jesus Christ will sit as Judge. You and I and all men will be the accused persons, and the judgment will be passed on all our deeds, the deeds of our entire life. Jesus, the Judge of judges, does not need a book, neither does He have to call upon witnesses, for He knows all things, even our most secret thoughts, words and deeds. Woe! to the sinner in that terrible hour. That judgment will take place immediately after death. For as

St. Paul tells us: "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. ix, 27).

Aim. Today I am going to tell you more about this judgment—the reason of this judgment and the rewards or punishments for man's soul after death.

Presentation. During the last days of Our Lord's public teaching in Jerusalem, He told the following story to His disciples. A certain man going into a far off country, called his servants, and delivered his goods to them. To one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one; to every one according to his proper ability: and immediately he took his journey. Now, he that had received the five talents went his way, and traded with them, and gained other five. And in like manner he that had received the two gained other two. But he that had received the one talent, going his way, digged in the earth, and hid his lord's talent. After a long time, the lord of these servants came and reckoned with them. And he that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying: "Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold I have gained other five over and above." His lord said to him: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." And to the second servant who, having received two talents, came back with four talents, his lord spoke in like manner. But he that had received one talent, came and said: "Lord, I know that thou art a hard man, and, being afraid, I went and hid my talent in the earth: behold, here thou hast that which is thine." Then his lord answering said: "Take away, therefore, the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he thinketh to have, shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant, cast ye out into exterior darkness" (Matt. xxiv).

Explanation. 1. That must have been a serious moment for these three servants, when their lord and master called them before him to render an account of the talents or money he had committed to their care. He wanted to judge them. Dear children, this lord is Almighty God, and we, you and I and all men, are these servants. God has given to us talents, that is, gifts and powers of soul and body, and He wants us to use them, while we are living in this world, for His greater honor and glory. He calls each one of us before Him to render an account just as soon as we die. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. ix, 27.) Yes, the moment immediately after death decides our fate for all eternity. The moment the soul leaves the body, it stands before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. **Christ will judge us immediately after our death.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. This judgment concerns us all. Therefore you, surely, would like to know how this judgment is to take place. Doubtless you have at some time or other looked out of the window into the dark night. Suddenly a bright flash of lightning appears in the sky—and the night becomes as bright as the day. You were then able to distinguish clearly all things in the distance. So too, will it be at the judgment of the soul after death. Like a flash of lightning a ray of light from God Almighty will enter into your soul—and your soul will be illuminated through and through! Your whole life will appear before you as plainly as the noonday sun. You will see all the good and all the wickedness of your whole life. You will see your soul just as it is in the sight of the Lord.—Or hold a glass of water to the sunlight. You can see even the tiniest speck of dirt floating in the water. So too, you will be able to see the smallest speck of sin, that stains that soul, when a ray of the divine light from the all knowing God falls into your soul. At this moment immediately after

death each man will be alone. No one else will be present. God will judge each man separately or in particular. Therefore it is called the Particular Judgment. **The Judgment we have to undergo immediately after death is called the Particular Judgment.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. When the lord of those three servants returned from his journey, he called them one by one before him, and said: "Give an account!" Then he inquired of each one in turn, what use he had made of the talents he had committed to his care. He wanted to reward the servants, who had made good use of the talents, and to punish the servant, who had wasted his lord's goods. So too, when the soul leaves the body at death, it will immediately appear before Christ, the Judge. The Lord will judge all its thoughts, words, deeds and omissions, so that He may reward or punish it according to the life it led while on earth. **Christ judges men immediately after death, that He may reward or punish them according to their deeds.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Let us think of that story again. When the lord demanded an accounting of his three servants, the first one came forward and said: "Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained other five over and above." What did his lord answer?—He replied: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." He spoke in like manner to the servant, who, having received two talents, came back with four talents. Thus did the master reward the two faithful servants. So too, our Lord and Master, God Almighty, will return at our death and demand that we give a reckoning of the talents He has entrusted to our care. If we have increased our talents, that is, if we have made good use of our body and our soul, of the graces and helps He has bestowed upon us so plentifully; if our soul departs this life clothed in sanctifying grace

and free from every stain of sin, even the slightest venial sin; if, moreover, the soul does not owe any debt of temporal punishment for sin—the Lord will say to us after the Particular Judgment: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Come with Me into Heaven."

But to the servant, who wasted his time and the goods of his lord, the master said: "Take away the talent from him and give it to him that hath ten talents. And the unprofitable servant cast ye into exterior darkness." Thus did the master punish the lazy and unfaithful servant. So too, if we have spent our life in sin and forgetfulness of God; if we have hid our talents; if we leave this world in mortal sin,—the Lord God will pass judgment, the very same sentence, upon us immediately after the Particular Judgment. He will say to such a soul: "Take away the talent from him and give it to him that hath ten talents. And the unprofitable servant cast ye into exterior darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Depart from Me, thou cursed soul, into Hell."

But not all men die with sanctifying grace in their soul; neither do all leave this life guilty of mortal sin. Many, perhaps most men, depart this life clothed with sanctifying grace, but guilty of venial sins or burdened with the debt for sin, for which they neglected to do penance while on earth. These souls are not condemned to Hell, for Hell exists only for those who have died in grievous sins. Neither are they fit for Heaven, because "nothing defiled can enter Heaven." Therefore there is another place where such souls go, until they are cleansed from every stain of sin and all the debt of temporal punishment has been paid. A terrible fire burns there, not indeed material fire, but a spiritual fire, that hurts and tortures and purifies the soul, until it is fit to enter the presence of the all holy God. This place of punishment is called Purgatory. The re-

wards or punishments for men's souls after the Particular Judgment are Heaven, Purgatory and Hell. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Christ will judge us immediately after death—2. Particular Judgment.
3. Why is there a Particular Judgment?
   To reward or punish men according to their deeds.
4. *Rewards:* "the joy of the Lord"—Heaven.
   Punishments: "exterior darkness"—Hell; suffering for a time—Purgatory.

Synthesis. We have just learned a very important truth, which we cannot afford to forget, even for a moment. What will happen to us immediately after death? Is there another judgment, that men have to undergo? When then will Christ judge us? Who will be there? What is this judgment called? Why is it called the Particular Judgment? Why is there a Particular Judgment? What rewards will Christ give to the faithful soul? What is required, in order that the soul may enter Heaven immediately after death? What punishments will Christ inflict on a soul, that leaves this world with mortal sin? What happens to a soul that departs life in venial sin? What other souls go to Purgatory? What are the rewards and punishments, that Christ gives to the soul immediately after death? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Every man will be judged twice; once immediately after death and the second time at the end of the world.—Let us compare these two judgments. At the first judgment every man is alone; at the last judgment all men are to be present at once. Therefore the first judgment is called the Particular Judgment, and the last judgment is called the General Judgment. At the Particular Judgment no one will hear what is going on except God and our guardian angel;

at the General Judgment all men of the whole world will hear and see what is taking place. After the Particular Judgment the soul can still go to Purgatory; but after the General Judgment there will be only Heaven and Hell. During the time from the Particular Judgment until the General Judgment the soul will be without the body. In Heaven there are only the souls of the just, but not their bodies. In Hell, too, there are only the souls of the wicked. Their bodies still rest in the graves. Only after the General Judgment will men receive again their bodies, and then the damned will be obliged to suffer with their bodies, while the just will enter Heaven with their bodies.

2. The judgments of the Lord are terrible indeed. A young man, who had allowed himself to be carried away by the words and example of wicked companions, soon forgot the teachings of holy Faith in their bad company. A virtuous mother had neglected nothing in his tender years that would inspire this young man with the love of God and the things of Heaven. It was due to this Christian education, which he had received at her knees, that, although he had lost his piety and virtue, he, nevertheless, had been able to preserve the Faith. One night, which followed a day of grievous sins, this young man had a terrible dream. He imagined that he had been struck by the hand of death, and that he had already been summoned before the judgment seat of Christ. No one can ever describe what must have been his confusion, his fear, and his awful agony at that dreadful moment; for when he awoke he lay as if in a burning fever, covered with perspiration, and trembling from head to foot. His hair also during the night had become as white as snow. "Leave me alone," he said to those who in the morning found him in this terrible condition, "leave me alone! I have seen my Judge; pardon me, Oh, my God! My Jesus, mercy!"

The young men, who had led him astray, hearing that he was ill and his mind seemingly out of order, went to visit him and to offer the sympathy that is

usually given on such occasions. On seeing them enter, he cried out: "Begone, all of you! No longer shall you be my friends; I will never see you again. I have this night seen my Judge. Oh! what majesty, what severity shone upon His angry countenance! Oh! what questions He asked me, which I could not answer at all. All my sins were written in a great book, and I read them all. I saw the enormous number of sins I had been guilty of, and their greatness. The devils were standing there waiting for the signal from the terrible Judge to drag me into Hell-fire. I trembled then, and I tremble now. As long as I live in this world I shall tremble at that terrible sight. False friends, begone! Go away from me forever! Oh, happy indeed would I be, if only I could know that I had satisfied my awful Judge, even by a life of the most rigorous penance! From this very moment I consecrate my whole life to this work of satisfaction. Alas! I must certainly very soon really appear before this dread tribunal, which I have seen in my dreams, perhaps even this very day. Oh! pardon me, my God," he continued, "I will from this instant never cease to cry to Thee for pardon and mercy. O my Jesus, mercy! O my Jesus, mercy!"

Dear children, the judgments of God are terrible. They are not like the judgments of men. For God sees faults, where men think that there are none. Perhaps you may not be conscious to yourselves of much sin; yet do not be too confident. Pray often as the Prophet David did: "From my hidden sins, deliver me, O Lord!" Then you may hope to escape the sentence on that day of wrath.

3. God will render unto every man according to his deeds.—A certain emperor was standing at the bedside of one of his most faithful servants, who was dying. He had always had a special affection for this man, because he had served him so faithfully for many years. Consequently when the emperor saw that this servant was so ill, he was filled with sincere grief. "My dear friend," the emperor said, "you have ever been faithful

and loyal to me, and I am sorry to see you lying here suffering so much. Ask of me, then, whatsoever you wish, and I will give it to you." "Ah," said the dying man, "there is one great favor I ask of you." "What is it?" asked the emperor, eagerly. "Give me, then, one day more of my life—just one day more." "Alas! my friend," he replied, "you ask of me what is beyond my power to give; the most powerful monarch on the face of the earth cannot add even one moment to a man's life, when God's time has come." At these words the servant raised his dying eyes to Heaven, and sighed. "Oh! foolish man, that I have been," he cried out. "I have spent my whole life in the service of my king: and now when I ask for a little longer time to live, he cannot grant me even one hour. Oh! if only I had served my God, my heavenly King, as faithfully as I served my earthly master, how happy would I not be at this moment. But alas! I did not do that, and now I die in fear and trembling at the terrible judgment that awaits me."

Dear children, remember that this life is short and uncertain. Death may come upon us at any moment, and after death the judgment. "As the tree falleth, so shall it lie" (Eccles. xi, 3.) "Broad is the way that leadeth to detruction, and many there are who go in thereat" (Matt. vii, 13.) "How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it" (Matt. vii, 14.) The sufferings of Purgatory are frightful indeed.

LESSON XXVI.

The Holy Ghost.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Who is the Holy Ghost? L. IX, Q. 94.

2) Is the Holy Ghost equal to the Father and the Son? L. IX, Q. 96.

3) From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed? L. IX, Q. 95.

4) Who sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles? L. IX, Q. 99.

5) How did the Holy Ghost come down upon the Apostles? L. IX, Q. 98.

6) On what day did the Holy Ghost come down upon the Apostles? L. IX, Q. 97.

7) Why did Christ send the Holy Ghost? L. IX, Q. 100.

8) Will the Holy Ghost abide with the Church forever? L. IX, Q. 101.

(N. B.—Since the children are already to a certain extent conversant with the doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost, from the lesson on the Blessed Trinity and elsewhere, the catechist may refresh the knowledge already possessed by the children by appropriate review questions, dwelling more in detail on the new doctrinal contents to be imparted to them as contained in questions three, seven and eight).

Preparation. Dear children, every man will be judged twice by the Saviour. The first judgment will occur immediately after death. Let us review this teaching briefly. *(Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson.)* Before Christ ascended into Heaven, He gave His disciples a very important command. He said to them: "Stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv, 49.) Jesus fulfilled this promise on Pentecost by sending the Holy Ghost upon His disciples. We profess our Faith in this truth in the eighth article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

Aim. Today we are going to review the principal doctrines concerning the Holy Ghost. We shall consider: a) Who the Holy Ghost is; b) His wonderful descent upon the Apostles and c) the marvelous effects of His power in the Church of Christ.

Presentation. The disciples of Jesus obeyed His instructions most faithfully. They remained together for nine days in a room in the city of Jerusalem with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. They prayed continually for the coming of the promised Spirit of God, and praised the Lord for all the wonderful things they had seen and heard. The morning of the tenth day arrived at last. Suddenly a noise was heard in the heavens above like the rumbling of a mighty wind storm, and it filled the whole house where they were assembled for fear of the Jews. Tongues like fire appeared and parting floated over the head of each one present in that room. All were filled with the Holy Ghost. Immediately the Apostles began courageously to preach and to speak in strange tongues according as the Holy Ghost moved them.

It was the great Feast of Pentecost. Hence a great multitude of God-fearing men from every nation under the sun were gathered together in Jerusalem to celebrate this solemn Jewish Feast. When these people heard the mysterious noise, a great concourse of people came together before the house, where the Apostles and the disciples of the Lord were assembled. All were astonished, for each one heard the Apostles speaking in his mother tongue. They were amazed and wondered, saying: "Are not these that speak, Galileans? How then have we heard every man our own tongue, wherein we were born?" But others mocked, saying: "These men are full of new wine."

Then Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke to the people. It was as though fire streamed forth from his mouth and touched the hearts of all. He said: "Ye men of Galilee, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth is a man approved by God among

you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you all know. This Jesus hath God raised from the dead, whereof all of us are witnesses. And now being exalted by the right hand of God, He hath poured forth the Holy Ghost over us, as you see and hear" (Acts of Ap. ii, 22s.)

These words struck deeply into the hearts of the Jews, and they said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles: "What shall we do, men and brethren?"—Peter answered: "Do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins: and you shall receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost." Many believed what Peter said and were baptized. And there were added to the Christian Church on that day about three thousand souls. They were all one in mind and heart, and they practised every Christian virtue. Ever since that remarkable day the Holy Ghost has been with the Church of Jesus Christ, guiding and leading it in the way of holiness and truth. *(Show the pupils a large picture of this scene.)*

Explanation. 1. Those were indeed remarkable things that happened on the first Christian Pentecost. What is it that strikes you especially?—The mysterious noise, the tongues of fire, the courage of the Apostles, who now braved even death itself, the strange languages they spoke, the sermon of St. Peter, the conversion of three thousand Jews to the Faith of Jesus Christ. All these things are so marvelous that any one can see, that not merely natural things occurred on that occasion. All these events were more than natural; they were real miracles. These wonders tell us plainly: "This is not the work of man; this can only be the work of God Himself." The Holy Ghost did all these things. St. Peter tells us that clearly in the words: "Today the Holy Ghost is poured forth over us." Yes, the Holy Ghost is God. We know that, too, from Christ's own words. For he said to His Apostles: "Baptize all men in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii, 19.) Yes, the Holy Ghost is one of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, true God like the Father and the Son. **The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)*

2. Since the Holy Ghost is true God like the Father and the Son, as we learned in the lesson on the Blessed Trinity, He must be equal to the Father and the Son in all things. That is what our Catechism says in the words: **The Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son, being the same Lord and God as they are.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. Jesus went to His home in Heaven, to His Father, on Ascension Thursday. On Pentecost Jesus sent the Holy Ghost upon His Apostles, as He had promised. The Holy Ghost, therefore, comes or proceeds from the Father and the Son. Consequently we say in the Creed in Holy Mass: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who is adored and glorified together with the Father and the Son." **The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

In the Holy Bible the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Father. "For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, that speaketh in you," Christ said to His Apostles. (Matt, x, 20.) The Holy Ghost is also called the Spirit of the Son. Thus we read the words: "And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba (Father)." (Gal. iv, 6.) You see, therefore, the Holy Ghost comes or proceeds from the Father and the Son. We know this truth, because Jesus Himself has revealed it to us; but we cannot understand it fully. It is a mystery of our faith. What is a mystery?—Let me try to make it a little clearer to you, if I can. Just look at the sun in the heavens. From the sun come rays and the rays of the sun give light. The light, therefore, comes or proceeds from the sun and from the rays of

the sun. The Holy Ghost, too, comes or proceeds at the same time from the Father and the Son. But He is not, therefore, later than the Father or the Son; for He is eternal like the Father and the Son. "The Holy Ghost is God of God, as light comes from light" (Tertullian).

4. While the Apostles and disciples of Jesus were assembled in the upper room in Jerusalem, ten days after the Ascension, suddenly a great noise was heard from the heavens above, and that noise like a mighty storm filled the whole house, where the followers of Jesus were gathered together. There appeared tongues, as it were of fire, and separating they floated over the heads of all that were present. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in different languages. **The Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But why did the Holy Ghost take the form of *tongues* of fire?—He did this, in order to become visible to men. God's Son, too, became visible to us. He did not only take the form or the appearance of a man; He really became a man. Can we say the same thing of the Holy Ghost?—The Holy Ghost is not really tongues of fire, but He appeared in that form or shape. That is the reason why you see Him sometimes represented in pictures as tongues of fire. We speak with a tongue. The Apostles were to announce the doctrines of Christ to all the nations. They could not do this of themselves. For in the first place, they did not understand the languages of those peoples, to whom they were to preach. Neither could they learn all these languages quickly. Therefore the Holy Ghost helped them in a wonderful way, so that they could speak all the languages of the peoples to whom they were to announce the Gospel. That was a great miracle.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit took the form of *fiery* tongues. Fire enlightens or makes bright, warms, overcomes everything with power, and purifies. The Holy

Ghost helped the Apostles by enlightening their minds, so that they were enabled to understand what they were to preach. He warmed their hearts with holy zeal and the love of God, so that they were enabled to endure the greatest hardships rather than cease preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost gave to their words such power that the people willingly listened to their preaching, and professing the truth, were purified from their sins and inflamed with the love of God and the desire of Heaven. That is why the Holy Ghost appeared in the form or shape of tongues, as it were, of fire.

5. You remember that Our Blessed Saviour Himself promised to send the Holy Ghost upon His Apostles. He fulfilled that promise on the great Feast of Pentecost. Our Catechism says: **Our Lord Jesus Christ sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

6. The Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles ten days after Jesus' Ascension into Heaven, or on the fiftieth day after His Resurrection from the dead. This miraculous event happened on Pentecost. Pentecost was a great and solemn Jewish Feast. The Jews celebrated Pentecost each year for two reasons. 1. They wished to recall the giving of the Ten Commandments by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, which occurred on the fiftieth day after the Israelites had left Egypt. 2. The Jews wished to thank God for the harvest, for this Feast was celebrated in the harvest time. The name "Pentecost" is derived from the Greek word "Pentecostes," which means the fiftieth day, because Pentecost was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Feast of the Pasch or Easter. The Catholic Church celebrates this great Feast every year fifty days after Easter, or ten days after the Ascension, to remind us of the wonderful descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. The priest wears red vestments on that day at Holy Mass, to recall to our minds the fire of the Holy Ghost, which appeared over the heads of the Apostles, and set their

hearts aflame with burning love of Jesus Christ. Pentecost is sometimes also called "Whitsunday," because of the white garments, which the newly baptized received on the vigil of Pentecost and which they wore on the Feast of Pentecost. **The Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles ten days after the Ascension of Our Lord; and the day on which He came down upon the Apostles is called Whitsunday or Pentecost.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

7. a) Now let us inquire *why Christ sent the Holy Ghost.* As long as Jesus was with the Apostles, they were full of error and weakness. They were even jealous of one another, and sometimes, too, they quarreled with one another. And how weak Peter was! Three times he denied that he knew the Lord Jesus. But after the Apostles had received the grace of the Holy Ghost, they were changed men. From sinful men they became holy Apostles. So, too, in regard to the first converts on the Feast of Pentecost. They, too, were sinful men. But no sooner did the Spirit of God enter into their souls, when they became holy and pleasing to God. Ever since that first great Pentecost, the Holy Ghost is to the Church what the sun is to Nature. When the warm sun in the springtime sends forth its rays over the earth, what can you see after a short time?—The sun's rays call forth the flowers from the ground and the blossoms from the trees. Everywhere green leaves, and buds, and blossoms appear. So too, the Holy Ghost sends forth unceasingly the rays of Divine Grace over the Church of Jesus Christ. In the Church there is no winter. These rays of grace enter into the hearts of the Christians. Sin disappears and grace enters. The Holy Ghost purifies the soul and makes it holy and pleasing to God. He does this especially through the Sacraments. That is the reason why the Sacraments have such wonderful power. Thus the water of Baptism can purify and make the soul holy. Is not that truly wonderful?—When the priest in Holy Penance speaks the words: "I absolve thee from thy

sins," the soul over which he says those words, if it is properly disposed, is again pure and holy in the sight of God. But how can the priest's words have such power?—The Holy Ghost is in the Sacrament of Penance. Without the power of the Holy Ghost the priest's words would be as nothing, would have no power. So it is with regard to all the Sacraments. Because the Holy Ghost never ceases to pour forth His graces over the Church, therefore there are and always will be saints in the Church. Just as by the power of the sun's rays the fruits on the trees become ripe, so too, by the power of the rays of grace from the Holy Ghost big and little saints become ripe for Heaven. Now we know why Christ sent the Holy Ghost. **Christ sent the Holy Ghost to sanctify His Church.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) The Apostles were simple, ignorant men. How hard it was for them to understand when Jesus explained something to them! Then Pentecost came. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. At that moment a wonderful light began to shine into their minds. Now of a sudden they understood all that Christ had spoken to them. Yes, they could even speak foreign languages. Peter was at once able to preach a most beautiful sermon; and yet, he had never learned how to preach. The Holy Ghost enlightened the minds of the Apostles with His heavenly light. That is the second reason why Christ sent the Holy Ghost. **Christ sent the Holy Ghost to enlighten the Apostles.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Before Pentecost the Apostles were fearful and timid. In the Garden of Olives they all ran away from Jesus. Peter was afraid of a simple maid servant. After the Saviour's Crucifixion His disciples carefully barred the doors for fear of the Jews. And these Apostles were to preach the Gospel to all nations! They were to conquer the world for Christ! What did they need, therefore?—They received power and strength from the Holy Ghost. On Pentecost the Spirit of God

conferred Holy Confirmation upon them. Now they no longer feared. Courageous even unto death they appeared before the wicked Jews, who had murdered the Son of God. Peter boldly condemned them in his sermon for their wickedness. The Apostles were ready to go to death for the Son of God, Christ Jesus. That is another reason why the Spirit of God came down upon the Apostles. **Christ sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles to strengthen them.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

d) What a change came upon the Apostles after the Holy Ghost had descended upon them! As soon as He shed His beams of grace upon them, all the wondering world was roused by the thunder of their voices. Their words were like so many fiery arrows, that are shot from hearts all afire with the love of God. The most renowned cities—Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Athens, Rome—heard with wonder the eloquent words of these poor, ignorant fishermen of Galilee. As the walls of Jericho fell to the ground at the sound of the trumpet of Josue, so too, the temples and the altars of the heathen gods fell at the sound of the preaching of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. The disciples of Jesus passed from city to city; from kingdom to kingdom. "Their sound went into the whole world," as the Holy Bible says. Their words reached into the farthest parts of the earth. Thus not by force of arms, not by wealth, but by the power of the Holy Ghost speaking through them, Christ's Apostles preached the Gospel of salvation to all the world. That is the fourth reason why the Spirit of the Lord God descended upon them on Pentecost. **Christ sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles to enable them to preach the Gospel.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

8. The Holy Ghost, Who came upon the young Church on Pentecost, has ever been with that Church and will ever remain with it to the end of the world. Jesus Himself had foretold that when He said to His Apostles: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give

you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever" (John xiv, 16). But the Apostles have died. Therefore Jesus promised that the Holy Ghost would be with their successors, the Pope and the Bishops of the Catholic Church, to the end of time. The Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, will help the rulers and pastors of Christ's Church to teach the true doctrines of Jesus Christ, and will enable them to sanctify the souls of men, especially through the Sacraments and Holy Mass. **The Holy Ghost will abide with the Church forever, and guide it in the way of holiness and truth.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Write on the blackboard:

The Holy Ghost:

1. Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.
2. Equal to the Father and the Son.
3. Proceeds from the Father and the Son.
4. Came upon the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues.
5. Whitsunday or Pentecost.
6. Sent by Christ.
7. To sanctify the Church; to enlighten the Apostles; to strengthen them; to enable them to preach the Gospel.
8. Will abide with the Church always, guiding it in holiness and truth.

Synthesis. We owe all the graces we possess to Jesus and to the Holy Ghost. It is like in a family: the father earns the daily bread for the children and the mother gives it out or distributes it to the little ones. Jesus earned all grace for us and the Holy Ghost distributes it to us. Who is the Holy Ghost? Is He equal to the Father and the Son? Why? From whom does the Holy Ghost come or proceed? How did He come down upon the Apostles? Who sent Him? Why did the Saviour send the Holy Ghost? Will the Holy Spirit remain with the Church forever? What does He do in

the Church? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. There is a Holy Ghost. We see that at the Baptism of Christ. The miracle of Pentecost, too, tells us the same truth. The miracle of Pentecost shows us also that the Holy Ghost is true God like the Father and the Son. When did the Holy Ghost perform a greater miracle?—By the power of the Holy Ghost the Son of God became a man and Mary was made the Mother of God.

2. For us the Holy Ghost is the distributor or dispenser of grace. All graces come from Him—sanctifying grace and actual grace. When did you receive the life of grace for the first time?—At Baptism the Holy Ghost adorned your soul with the heavenly garment of grace and raised you to the dignity of a child of God; yes, He made you to be His living temples. Perhaps you have lost the life of grace by mortal sin. Then the Holy Ghost restored it to you in the Sacrament of Penance. He also gave you Holy Communion, for He it is, Who works the miracle of Consecration at Holy Mass;—the priest is merely His instrument. You see, therefore, the Holy Ghost has already sanctified you; and if you are one day to become a saint in Heaven, it will be through the power of the same Holy Spirit of God.

3. The Holy Ghost strengthened and confirmed the Apostles on Pentecost. They prepared for His coming by a devotion of nine days. This was the first Christian Novena. You, too, have been made strong by the Holy Spirit of God. Your day of Pentecost was your Confirmation-day. The Holy Ghost is still with the Church and will remain with it to the end of time. How thankful we ought to be to the Spirit of God for all the goodness and kindness He has shown us! Let us show our gratitude now by singing (or reciting) devoutly the beautiful hymn in honor of the Holy Ghost.

"Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And in our hearts take up Thy rest;
Come with Thy grace and heavenly aid,
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made."

"O Holy Ghost, thro' Thee alone,
Know we the Father and the Son:
Be this our never-changing creed,
That Thou dost from them both proceed."

"Praise we the Father and the Son,
And the Holy Ghost with them One;
And may the Son on us bestow
The gifts that from the Spirit flow." Amen.

LESSON XXVII.

The Foundation and Spread of the Church of Christ.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the Church? L. XI, Q. 115.
2) Who is the invisible Head of the Church? L. XI, Q. 116.

Preparation. Dear children, after Christ had ascended into Heaven He sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. Let us review the truths we have learned concerning the Holy Ghost in the preceding lesson. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.)* We now come to the ninth article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of the Saints." The doctrine concerning the Church is as beautiful as it is important. But, of course, we are speaking not of the lifeless Church of stone or wood, but rather of the living Church of which we are the living stones. Our Blessed Saviour often speaks of His Church in His sermons to the people. He says: "On this rock I will build My Church." He loves to call His Church "the kingdom of Heaven or

the kingdom of God." Thus for instance He says: "The kingdom of Heaven is like to a mustard seed, to a pearl, to leaven, to a net." "The kingdom of Heaven is like to a king, who made a marriage for his son." Yes, the Church is really the kingdom of Heaven on earth and the vestibule of the true kingdom of Heaven, for we have Jesus with us.

Aim. But what is the Church? When did it come? Where is the Church? All this is perhaps not yet quite clear to you. And yet, every Catholic child ought to know these truths very well. To-day, therefore, I am going to explain to you: How the Church of Christ began to be what it is.

Presentation and Explanation.

I. The Foundation of the Church. (Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).

a) After Jesus had left the desert, He began to preach in public. He went about from place to place throughout the Holy Land, and did as a sower does, who sows his seed. He Himself tells us that in a parable or story. "A sower went out to sow. And whilst he sowed, some fell by the wayside and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock, and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among the thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground, and being sprung up, yielded fruit some thirty fold, some fifty fold, and some even an hundred fold." (Luke viii, 19s; Matt. xiii, 3s.)

Dear children, this sower is Christ Himself. He scattered the seed of Divine Truth everywhere. Many indeed heard His Divine Word, but refused to believe: the seed fell by the wayside, or upon the ground, or among the thorns. Many others, however, did believe in Christ; the divine seed fell upon good ground—into good hearts. These believers or faithful, who accepted Christ's word, were the first sheep of His flock. Christ Himself was the Good Shepherd.—That is how

the Church began to be. **Christ taught and gathered the faithful about Him.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

b) But Jesus could not remain always with His flock. He wished at some time or other to return to His Father in Heaven. And yet, His Church was to last to the end of the world. If Our Blessed Saviour had left His flock alone, the sheep would soon have been dispersed again, and the Church would have been no longer. Jesus foresaw this very clearly. How then did He provide for His Church?—He selected or chose from His most faithful and zealous disciples the twelve Apostles. These twelve chosen men were henceforth with Him continually. They saw everything that Jesus did; they heard all that He spoke. They were at some future time to become the shepherds of His flock, when He Himself will have left the world. Let us remember, therefore, that **Christ appointed the Apostles to be the shepherds of the faithful.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

c) However, the Church was not yet completed; it was still lacking the right life.—When God created the first man, He formed his body out of the earth. But the body was as yet without life. Then God breathed the breath of life into man's face, and gave him an immortal soul. Thus man became a living being. In like manner God acted in regard to the Church. On Pentecost the Holy Ghost breathed the breath of life into the Church. Then the mouths of the Apostles were opened and they began to preach Christ crucified. The hearts of the Jews were opened and three thousand were baptized on that same day. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. Just as the soul dwells and acts within the body of man and gives it life and action, so too, the Holy Ghost dwells and acts in the Church, imparting to it life and action. The Holy Ghost is the soul of Christ's Church.—Thus was the Church completed and made perfect on Pentecost. **Christ sent the**

Holy Ghost in order that He might abide with the Church forever. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

II. The Growth or Spread of the Church. (Use the blackboard.)

The Church was, of course, as yet small and insignificant like a little seed. What are three thousand people among so many millions of men! Our Blessed Saviour, therefore, once compared His Church with a mustard seed. "The kingdom of Heaven is like to a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which is the least indeed of all seeds, but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof" (Matt. xiii, 31s).

This parable fits the Church of Jesus Christ very well. Soon after Pentecost the Church began to grow and became greater and greater. And in our own day it has become a giant tree, which spreads its branches over the whole earth. But how did this happen?—Christ said to His Apostles: "Going therefore teach ye all nations"! The Apostles carried out these instructions of their Master most faithfully. They preached first among the Jews of the Holy Land. Then they divided the earth amongst themselves and went as missionaries into heathen lands. Peter remained in the beginning in Palestine; but after a while he went to Rome and founded there the first Christian congregation or church. Matthew, too, labored first among the Jews of the Holy Land, and then he went into Persia. The other Apostles preached in other countries. The greatest and most zealous of all the missionaries was St. Paul. He undertook three missionary journeys, and passed through Asia Minor; then he went over into Europe and came to Italy and even to Spain. Everywhere the Apostles preached and baptized the faithful, conducted divine services and strengthened the weak and the doubting. Then they went on further. But before leaving they would choose and ordain a worthy man to be Bishop of that little

flock or church. This Bishop was, then, the ruler or shepherd of the flock. Thus one Christian congregation or church after the other sprang into existence in various parts of the world. The little mustard seed gradually became a tree. Limbs and branches were formed, and the birds from all quarters of the heavens came and dwelt in the branches of this mighty tree—from all countries of the world the heathens came and were made children of the Church of Jesus Christ. Thus the Church grew and spread everywhere. Let us remember, therefore, **the Apostles went as missionaries into heathen countries and founded congregations of faithful everywhere.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

III. The Nature of the Church. (Use the blackboard.)

There were then many Christian congregations or churches in all parts of the world.

a) In each little congregation or church the members believed the very same teachings which the Apostles continued to preach in Christ's name. Each member did not make his own faith; on the contrary, each Christian believed and professed the faith, which the lawful shepherds of the flock taught in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ. **All professed the same faith of Jesus Christ.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

b) Each little Christian congregation, no matter in what part of the world it happened to be, no matter what language it happened to speak, received the very same sacraments. Each one of the members of these various Christian congregations was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Each one received the Holy Ghost in Confirmation. Each one confessed his sins to the Apostles or to their lawful representatives. Each one went to the Table of the Lord to receive Jesus in Holy Communion. Each one assisted at the same Holy Sacrifice of the

Mass. **All partook of the same sacraments.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

c) These Christian congregations or churches in the various countries of the world were not separated from one another; each one did no exist for itself alone. It was like in a big country. In the United States of America there are many, very many congregations or communities,—villages, towns, cities, states; but all of them belong together and form one great congregation—the United States of America. The head of this great congregation or community is the President. So, too, the new Christian congregations or churches in the various countries of the world all belonged together and formed one great congregation or church—the Church of Jesus Christ. The common head of this great congregation or church was St. Peter—the Pope. The other Apostles and the new Bishops were under St. Peter, and were subject to the Pope. Thus it was in the time of the Apostles; thus it is today. **All were governed by their lawful pastors under one visible head.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Now let us put all these parts together and we will be able to say what the Church is. **The Church is the congregation of all those who profess the faith of Christ, partake of the same sacraments and are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible head.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* In short we can also say: The Church is the kingdom of Christ on earth.

2. The Church, of course, had from the very beginning also another head. Christ, the Founder of the Church, is and always will be the Head of the Church. He Himself has told us so plainly: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 20.) He means to say: "Even though I am no longer with you on earth in a visible manner; even though you can no longer see Me in your midst, still I will always remain with My Church in an invisible manner to the end of the world." **Christ is the invisi-**

ble Head of the Church. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

Write on the blackboard:

1. The *Foundation* of the Church:
   a) Christ taught—gathered the faithful together.
   b) Christ appointed the Apostles as shepherds.
   c) Christ sent the Holy Ghost—completed the Church on Pentecost.

2. The *Growth or Spread* of the Church:
   The Apostles — missionaries — founded new churches everywhere.

3. The *Nature* of the Church:

The Church is the congregation of	a) all who profess the faith of Christ; b) all who partake of the same sacraments; c) all who are governed by their lawful pastors under one *visible* Head—the Pope.

4. Christ—the *invisible* Head of the Church.

Synthesis. One thing we have seen clearly today; and that must fill us with real joy: the Church is not the work of man, but it is the work of God Himself. How did the Church begin? 1. Christ taught and gathered the faithful about Him. 2. What else did He do? *(Develop the remaining points by appropriate questions.)* How did the Church grow or spread? After the Apostles had formed new congregations, whom did they appoint as shepherds? Were all these new congregations separated from one another? What made them all one? *(Develop this point by point by appropriate questions.)* Who was the first visible Head of the Church? Is not Christ, too, the Head of the Church? What kind of a Head is He? What is the Holy Ghost in the Church? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class.)*

Application. 1. We know what the Church of Christ is. Now you can easily answer the question: Where is the Church?—The Christian Church is everywhere on earth; in all countries and among all people; for everywhere we find children of the Church, Catholics. In the United States of America there are about eighteen millions of Catholics, and in the whole world there are nearly three hundred millions of children of the Church of Christ. In all the countries of the world there are many Catholics; in some countries there are more Catholics than members of any other church. All these are brothers and sisters of ours. All belong together and form one great family—the Church of Jesus Christ. All believe the very same doctrines of Christ; all receive the same sacraments and assist at the same Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; all are governed by their lawful pastors—the priests and the bishop and the one common father and head of all —the Pope. Christ Jesus, the invisible Head of the Church, teaches, sanctifies and governs through His visible ministers, especially through the Pope.

2. Now let me ask you another important question: Who belongs to the Church of Jesus Christ?—All those men belong to the Church of Jesus Christ, who profess the faith of Jesus Christ, who partake of the same sacraments and who are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible head—the Pope. We are all members of this Church, thanks be to God! But there are many men, who do not belong to the Church. Do you know any?—The heathens or pagans do not belong to the Church. Why?—Because they are not even baptized and, therefore, are not Christians. The Jews do not belong to the Church of Christ. Why not?—They are not pagans or heathens like those who adore false gods or idols. For the Jews believe in one God, but they do not believe in the Most Holy Trinity nor in Jesus Christ. The Turks (Mohammedans) do not belong to the Church. They believe like the Jews in one God, and consider Jesus Christ to be a great, a Divine

Prophet; but they have no Baptism. All these people are called by the name **infidels** *(write the word on the blackboard)* and do not belong to the Church.

But there are many Christians, who do not belong to the Church. The **heretics** *(write the word on the blackboard)* for instance the Protestants, are not children of the Church. They are indeed baptized, but they have a false faith and do not want to have anything to do with the Pope. The Russians, too, do not belong to the Church of Christ. They are **schismatics** *(write the word on the blackboard)*, that is to say, they are separated from the Church of Christ. They believe nearly the whole Faith that Catholics profess; they receive the same sacraments that Catholics have. But they do not acknowledge the Pope as their Head; their Pope was the Russian Czar. Moreover, many of the Greeks are schismatics.—Besides these there are many persons, who are **excommunicated** *(write the word on the blackboard)* from the Church. By excommunicated persons I mean Christians, who on account of some grievous sin have been punished by being cut off from the Church. All such persons, therefore, are outside of the Church of Christ.

3. Now there is one thing more I should like to know. Are also those Catholics, who are guilty of mortal sin, separated from the Church, or do they continue to be members of Christ's Church?—You have often seen withered branches on a tree. They still cling to the tree, but they have no sap, no life within them any longer. That is the way a Catholic is, who is guilty of mortal sin. He is joined indeed visibly with the Church, but interiorly, in his soul, he is without life; he is dead in the sight of God and unfit for Heaven. If such a person dies in the state of mortal sin, he will be cast into the fire of Hell and will burn forever, just as dry and withered branches of a tree are cut off and thrown into the fire.—Are all of you living branches of the tree of Christ, the Catholic Church?—You know that your eternal happiness depends upon that. Or do

some of you perhaps carry mortal sin about with you? —That would be a great misfortune indeed. Thank our Blessed Saviour a thousand times that He has made you members of His Church: Always remain good children of that Church: that is the very best way to show your gratitude for this precious grace.

LESSON XXVIII.

The Constitution of Christ's Church.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Who is the visible Head of the Church? L. XI, Q. 117.

2) Why is the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, the visible Head of the Church? L. XI, Q. 118.

3) Who are the successors of the other Apostles? L. XI, Q. 119.

Preparation. Dear children, Christ established a kingdom on earth—the Church. But the Church was not finished all at once. Just as a plant develops gradually from the little seed, so too, the Church grew and developed slowly and gradually. Let us review what we have learned concerning the foundation, the growth and the nature of the Church of Christ. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.)*—Today we shall go a step farther. In every city there is a head,—the mayor. Other men assist him in the work of the government. In the country, in which we live, the head is the President. Other men help the President in the government. In the community or congregation of all Christians, namely in the Church of Christ, it is very much the same as in a city or in this great country of ours.

Aim. Today I am going to explain to you more in detail how this Church is constituted; that is to say, what sort of a constitution or government the Founder of the Church gave to His Church.

Presentation. Jesus Christ founded His Church upon the twelve Apostles. He said expressly to His Apostles: "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound in Heaven. And whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matt. xviii, 18). But the Saviour honored one of His Apostles in a special manner. This favored Apostle was St. Peter. The Lord made St. Peter to be the foundation stone, upon which He was to build His Church. How did that happen?

Once in the course of His journeys through the Holy Land Jesus came into the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi near the Lake of Genesareth *(point out the locality on a map)*. His disciples were with Him. On that occasion the Saviour asked them saying: "Whom do men say that the son of man is"? They answered: "Some John the Baptist, other some Elias, or one of the prophets." Jesus then said to them: "But whom do you say I am"? Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answering said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father, Who is in Heaven. And I say to thee: that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I shall build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound in Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matt. xvi, 13s.) *(Show the children a large picture of this scene.)*

Now what Jesus promised to St. Peter, He gave to him after His resurrection from the dead. It happened on the shore of the Lake of Genesareth. Seven disciples of Jesus were there. By obeying their Divine Master's command they made a great catch of fishes. While partaking of their simple meal on the shore of the lake, Jesus asked Simon Peter the following question: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than

these"? Peter answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said to him: "Feed my lambs." He said to Peter a second time: "Simon, son ofJohn, lovest thou Me"? Peter answered again: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." He said to him: "Feed My lambs." Jesus then said to him for the third time: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me"? Peter was grieved, because Jesus had said to him the third time: "Lovest thou Me"? And he said to Him: "Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said to him: "Feed My sheep" (John xxi). *(Show the pupils a large picture of this scene.)*

Explanation. 1. Those were two very important events, important not for Peter only, but for the whole Church. What did Peter become?—Let us look at these words of the Saviour to Peter a little more closely, and we shall see at once what they mean.

a) Peter was first called Simon. When Jesus called him to be an Apostle, He had already given him a new name. The Saviour changed Simon's name into Peter. The word Peter means "rock." This name tells us what this Apostle was to become—the rock or the foundation of the Church. We see that clearly from the words of Christ to Peter: "Thou are Peter (rock) and upon this rock I will build My Church." What does the Saviour mean? He means to say: "I will build a Church—a living Church. In this Church the Christians or the faithful are to be the stones, but Peter is to be the foundation rock, the basis, upon which the whole Church is to be built." Now the foundation rock is the principal thing in a building. Therefore according to Christ's will Peter is to be the principal person in the Church—the Head, the Pope.

b) After having said these words to Peter, Christ immediately tells even more clearly what power Peter is to receive in the Church. He says: "To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven." The kingdom of Heaven signifies the kingdom of God on earth,

the Church. Whoever has the keys of the house, he is the master in the house; he can do as he likes in the house and no one can interfere. Thus did Christ commit the keys of His Church to the keeping of Peter. Peter is, therefore, master of the Church of Christ; he is the Head of the Church. He can command in the Church.—Did you ever see the coat of arms of the Pope? *(Show the pupils a large picture of the papal coat of arms.)*—It contains two keys. Now you can easily understand what these keys mean. What do the two keys signify?—In the following words Christ explains even more plainly just how Peter is to exercise the power of the keys. He says: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed in Heaven." "To bind" here means to command. Therefore when Peter gives a command, the children of the Church are bound in conscience by that command; they must observe the command just as though it had been given by God in Heaven. "To loose" means to remit or to forgive or to excuse. Therefore when Peter remits or takes away sins, they are remitted or forgiven. When Peter remits or takes away the punishment due to sins, that punishment is remitted or taken away in Heaven, too. When Peter does away with a law, it is done away with also in Heaven by God. —Do you see, such great power has Peter in the Church of Christ! He may bind or loosen in the name of God —he is to be the Head of the Church of Jesus Christ.

c) It was on the shore of the Lake of Genesareth that Christ solemnly conferred the office of Chief Shepherd on St. Peter. "Feed My lambs: feed My sheep!" Do you know who the lambs and the sheep of Christ are?—The lambs are the young sheep that follow the old sheep. We all, the children of the Church, the great and the small, the ordinary Christians, are the lambs, that follow the Bishop. The sheep are the Fathers of the Church, the Apostles and the Bishops, to whom the rest of the faithful are subject. Peter

has been made the Chief Shepherd of the entire flock. All, the lambs and the sheep, the faithful and the bishops, are to be fed by Peter, that is, Peter is to teach and to rule them all. **Christ made Peter the Chief of the Apostles, and the visible Head of the Church.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)*

But remember, dear children, that Christ says expressly: "Feed My lambs: feed My sheep"! Peter is only to take Christ's place; he is to be the vicar of Christ; he is to feed the lambs and the sheep in Christ's stead. But the Protestants refuse to believe this. They say: "There is no need of a visible Head of the Church." Who can show that this is false?—Our city has many thousands of inhabitants all of whom are visible members. All of them together form, as it were, a great body, the city of N. N. At the head of this community is the mayor, the visible head.—There must be such a head, otherwise there is no order. Now the Church has many millions of visible members. All of them together form a visible body—the Christian Church. There must also be a visible head in the Church, otherwise everything will go to pieces. Christ foresaw this and, therefore, He arranged everything so wisely. **Christ made St. Peter His Vicar and the visible Head of the Church.** *(Repeat together; use the blackbiard.)*

2. St. Peter was the first Pope. We can show this very easily. After Christ's ascension into Heaven Peter immediately appeared as the Head of the young Church. A new Apostle was to be chosen to replace Judas. That was indeed a very important matter. Peter directed the election. He said to his fellow Apostles: "It is necessary, that another Apostle take the place of Judas." Then they elected Matthias.—Who was it that preached first on the Feast of Pentecost?—It was Peter who came forward and taught, not indeed because he could do that the best of all, but because he was the Head of the Church. When the Jews

asked: "Ye brethren, what should we do?" Peter answered: "Do penance, and each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of your sins!" —Later on a certain occasion all the Apostles came together in Jerusalem and held a council. At last Peter again arose and spoke the deciding word: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts of Ap. xv, 28.) Four lists of names of the Apostles are given in the Bible. The name of St. Peter always occurs at the head. Indeed, the Evangelist, St. Matthew, (x, 2) says expressly: "The names of the twelve Apostles are these: the first, Simon, who is called Peter." Why does he call Peter the first?—Peter was not the first Apostle chosen by Christ; neither was Peter the most learned of the Apostles; but he was the Head of the Apostles and of the whole Church of Jesus Christ. **St. Peter was the first Pope.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. But Peter died. Did his office die too?—That could not be; for Christ said expressly, that His Church was to last to the end of the world. Hence there must still be a Peter in the Church, a bishop, who has the office of St. Peter. Who has become Peter's successor?—Just listen attentively! Peter came as a missionary to the city of Rome, Italy. There he erected his bishop's throne, his episcopal see. Thus Rome became the episcopal city of St. Peter. Peter became the Bishop of Rome. There, too, he died as a martyr for the Faith (on the 29th of June in the year 67.) Peter was succeeded by Linus as Bishop of Rome. Linus was the lawful successor of St. Peter and, therefore, the Head of the Church of Christ. Cletus succeeded Linus. And so it has continued up to our own day, one pope followed the other. Up to the present time there have been two hundred and sixty popes. We, too, have a pope, our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV. You see, therefore, **Our Holy Father, the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible Head of the Church.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)*

The Pope, the Bishop of Rome, is the visible Head of the Church, because he is the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ made the chief of the Apostles and the visible Head of the Church. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. But St. Peter could not rule or govern the whole Church alone. The other Apostles were to govern with him. Christ Himself arranged that this should be so. Therefore He said to all the Apostles: "You shall bind and loose on earth." Each Apostle was a bishop and each one was Head or Shepherd in a part of the Church. But all of them were under the Chief Shepherd, St. Peter. So it is even now in the Church. Each Bishop is Chief Shepherd in his own diocese. But all the bishops are under the supreme power of the Pope, the lawful successor of St. Peter, the first Pope. If a new bishop is to be chosen and consecrated, he must first get the approval of the Pope; he must ask the Pope to acknowledge him as bishop. Only then may he rule or goven his diocese as Chief Shepherd. Who then are the successors of the other Apostles?— **The successors of the other Apostles are the bishops of the Catholic Church.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. When the Apostles in the course of their missionary journeys formed new Christian congregations or churches in various parts of the world, they also consecrated new bishops and priests. The priests were to help the Bishop in the work of preaching and administering the Sacraments. But the priests were obliged to obey the Bishop in all things; for the Bishop was their spiritual father. So it is in our own time. The dioceses are generally very large. Our diocese (Rochester) has more than one hundred and seventy thousand souls. The Bishop, of course, cannot do everything alone. Therefore he has helpers or colaborers—they are the priests. The Bishop chooses pious, young men; sees that they are properly educated and then ordains them to be priests. By the Holy Sacrament of Orders these men receive the power to baptize, to offer the Holy

Sacrifice of the Mass, to forgive sins, etc. Then the Bishop sends one of these priests into a certain part of the diocese and gives him the command to preach to the people of this place in the name of the Bishop, to instruct the children in Christian Doctrine, to say Mass, to baptize, to forgive sins, etc. Such a priest is called a **pastor**, and the place in which he is to care for the spiritual needs of souls, is called a **parish**. If the parish is too large for one pastor, the Bishop sends him other priests, who are to assist him. These priests are called **assistant priests** (curates). The priests are, therefore, also Shepherds of the faithful, but the Bishop is the Chief Shepherd. **The priests are helpers of the Bishop in the care of souls.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Peter—the Chief of the Apostles—the visible Head of the Church—the Vicar of Christ on earth.
2. Peter—the first Pope (Bishop of Rome).
3. The Pope (Bishop of Rome)—the successor of Peter.
4. The Bishops—the successors of the Apostles.
5. The Priests—the helpers of the Bishops.

Synthesis. In certain countries there is a king. The king has his ministers and under the ministers are other officials. In the same way Christ has arranged His Church—just as in a kingdom. The Pope is the king in the kingdom of Christ. The bishops are his ministers—but the bishops are also little kings in their own dioceses. The other officials are the priests. Now let us review what we have just learned. Did Christ give to His Church a visible Head? Whom did He make to be the visible Head of His Church? How do we know this? Who was the first Pope? Who became Pope after Peter's death? Why is the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, the visible Head of the Church? Who are

the bishops? Who are the priests? Who arranged all this? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. The Bishop of Rome is called "Holy Father" or "Pope." The word Pope is derived from the Greek word pappas (Latin papa), that is, father. Why is he called by this name?—All the faithful form a great and holy family, are brothers and sisters. The Bishop of Rome is the father of this large and holy family. He loves his spiritual children dearly and sees to it that the true doctrines of Jesus Christ are taught them, that the Sacraments are rightly administered, etc. He rules over all and the children of the Church are obliged in conscience to obey him in spiritual matters. He is our holy father in matters that are holy and sacred; in matters that concern God, Heaven and our eternal salvation. He is also called "Most Holy Father," "His Holiness," "the universal Bishop of the Church," "the head and principal of the whole Episcopate," etc. All these titles express the great dignity and honor of his office. He is called "Sovereign Pontiff," because he is superior to all other Pontiffs or Bishops. In his Apostolic letters the Pope signs himself "the Servant of the servants of God," in order to set us a pattern of humility. His office as visible Head of the whole Church is called "the Holy See," "the See of Peter," "the Apostolic See." The present Pope is called Benedict XV, because there have been fourteen popes before him, who bore the name of Benedict. The Pope takes a new name when he is elected to that office, just as Peter received a new name from our Blessed Saviour. From the tenth century onward it has been the custom to choose the name from those of previous Popes, St. Peter's name alone being excepted out of reverence. Because the Pope is the supreme Head of the whole Church, he has outwardly also certain marks of honor over the bishops. He wears a white soutane or garment, the tiara or threefold crown, which expresses the threefold office of

teacher, priest and shepherd. He carries a shepherd's staff or crozier ending in a cross. His foot is kissed by the faithful who visit him, in memory of those words of St. Paul (Rom. x, 15) : "How beautiful are the feet of those that bring glad tidings of good things."

The Pope may choose seventy cardinals to act as his counsellors and to help him govern the Church. The cardinals have the right of choosing a new Pope after the Holy See has been vacant ten days. The cardinals wear a scarlet or red hat and mantle, to remind them of their duty of loyalty to the Pope even at the cost of their blood. Have we any cardinals in this country?

2. The bishops, too, are called the Vicars of Christ; and in reality they are His Vicars; for in the exercise of their holy ministry and in the government of their own dioceses, each bishop holds the place of Christ as teacher, ruler, priest and lawgiver. The bishops are, as St. Paul says, "ambassadors for Jesus Christ, God exhorting the faithful by their mouth." St. Paul calls them "God's coadjutors" (fellow laborers.) But the Pope alone is the Vicar of Jesus Christ "as the Supreme visible Head of the whole Church." The bishop is addressed by the title "His Lordship" or "the Right Reverend Bishop." On certain solemn occasions the bishop wears the mitre and carries the crozier or shepherd's staff with bent or curved top, to signify that his power is limited. Bishops wear a ring, too, as a sign that they are wedded to their diocese. They carry a pectoral cross suspended by a chain from their shoulders.

3. The Pope, bishops and priests form what is called the Clergy. They have a high and great dignity. Therefore you ought to look upon them with great reverence. For Jesus has said: "He that despiseth you, despiseth Me. He that despiseth Me, despiseth Him, that sent Me" (Luke x, 16.) But they have also a heavy burden to bear. Consequently you ought to pray zealously for them, especially for the Holy Father. The Church is indeed indestructible, for Christ has

promised that the gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church. However, as good and devoted children of this Church we must pray for God's protection and blessing upon the pastors of the Church. The prayers, which are recited after a low Mass, are especially for the welfare of the Church. Let us recite now the prayer to St. Michael, the protector of Holy Church, that he may obtain grace for the Clergy. "St. Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle," etc.

LESSON XXIX.

The Church—The Guide to Heaven.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Why did Christ found the Church? L. XI, Q. 120.

2) Which are the means instituted by Our Lord to enable men at all times to share in the fruits of the Redemption? L. XI, Q. 114.

3) Are all men bound to belong to the Church? L. XI, Q. 121.

Preparation. Dear children, Christ Himself founded the Church and arranged the constitution of the Church. He told us how He wished His Church to be governed and appointed the first rulers. Let us review this truth briefly. *(Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson.)*—Whenever God does anything, He always does it for a wise purpose, for a holy end. Why did He create the world?—Why did He make you?—Why did the Son of God become a man?—Christ established the Church and appointed the shepherds and one visible Head over His flock. He placed the Holy Sacraments in the keeping of His Church. But why did He do all this?—Surely He must have had some wise and holy purpose in view.

Aim. Today I shall show you why Christ founded His Church. I shall give you the answer to that other very important question: Are all men bound to belong

to the Church? Then we shall see clearly that the Church is indeed like a good mother, that guides her children through life to Heaven.

Presentation. When a child is born into the world, it is a poor heathen child. You, too, at one time were poor heathen children. Heaven was closed against you. But then your parents had you brought to the church. There you received the Holy Sacrament of Baptism and became children of God. The Holy Ghost decorated your souls with the wonderful heavenly garment of grace. The heavens were opened over you and the heavenly Father said with joy: "This is My dear child!" Of course you knew nothing at all of all this.

Then gradually you grew up and finally you came to school. Now the Church sent a priest to you, to instruct you in our holy religion. But as you became older, alas! a great many poisonous weeds, sins, sprang up in your hearts. And when you were ready for your first Holy Communion, perhaps many of you could say: "I am still such a little child, and yet, what a great sinner I have become!" Then the Church led you to your first Holy Confession. Your hearts were made pure and free from sin, and our dear Lord could say to His holy angels: "Behold! this child was lost and is found again; it was dead and is come back to life again." Soon a much greater grace was given to you —the grace of your first Holy Communion. That was a great day of joy for you all; for Jesus came into your souls. The Bishop came into the Church and laid his hands upon you and made you strong in the Faith by the power of the Holy Ghost in the Sacrament of Holy Confirmation.

Since then you have received the Holy Sacraments frequently. These graces will never cease until you die. And even after you become bigger and leave school, the Church will not forget you. Time and again you may receive the Holy Sacraments. Every day the Church opens her hands, in order to distribute graces to you—at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Re-

peatedly the Church opens her mouth, in order to instruct you in the Christian Faith and life—in sermons and in the Christian Doctrine class. And finally when the end comes, the Church will send the priest again to you, to administer to you the last Holy Sacraments and to strengthen you for the last journey into eternity. And after you have died, the priest will come again to bless your corpse in the house and at the grave before burial. But the Church will not forget you even after you have died and your corpse has been committed to the silent grave. She does not indeed weep for you, for that is useless; but she prays for you and offers the adorable Sacrifice for your soul's welfare. She does all this even though no other person in all the world even thinks of you. For in every Mass there is a Memento for the Poor Souls in Purgatory. Otherwise many a Poor Soul would have to remain in the prison of Purgatory until the end of the world suffering untold torments.

You see, therefore, that the Church is the best of mothers! She does not leave her children for a single moment from their birth to their death; she guides them by her motherly hand from the cradle to the grave. Therefore if men wish to be saved, they must belong to this Church. And no one, who knows that the Church is the true Church, can reach Heaven, if he remains outside that Church. The Church is like Noah's ark, in which alone men can be saved from the dreadful deluge, the abyss of Hell.

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, I am your teacher in religion. I am to teach you the Christian Faith and life and thereby show you the way to Heaven. Who sends me to you in the school?—I come in the name and by the order of the right reverend Bishop and of the Church. But it is not only the children, who need instruction, the big people, too, the adults, need to be taught the truths of our holy Faith. How does the Church take care of this?—Every Sunday and Holyday of obligation the Church has the word of God an-

nounced to the people in the church. The heathens, too, are to be converted to the true Faith and the true Church. What does the Church, therefore, do?—She sends her missionaries continually into heathen lands. You see, therefore, that the Church continues to do what Christ once did. Jesus was the Divine Teacher among men. But before leaving the world, He left His office of teaching to His Apostles, for to them He said solemnly: "Going therefore into the whole world, teach ye all nations." Now we know why Christ founded the Church. **Christ founded the Church to teach all men.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)* Therefore what the Church teaches is not the word of man, but God's word and God's truth.

b) The Church has taught you your holy religion. But that is not all that she does for you. What other good has the Church done for you up to the present time?—What Sacraments have you received already? —In Holy Baptism from a heathen child you have been changed into a Christian child; from a child of man you have been made into a child of God. In the Holy Sacrament of Penance from a child of sin, you have been changed into a child of grace. In Holy Communion you have become a living tabernacle of Jesus. In Holy Confirmation you have been made a temple of the Holy Ghost. For her children, who are suffering and in danger of death, the Church has a special Sacrament—Extreme Unction. But there must also always be priests in the Church. Therefore the Church has the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Parents, too, need a special blessing from God for their children. Therefore there is in the Church the Sacrament of Matrimony. But where is the source and fountain of all graces?—The source of grace is the unbloody Sacrifice of the Cross, the Holy Mass. The Church offers this great sacrifice each day for her children's welfare. And every time that Holy Mass is offered, Heaven is opened and a rain of grace descends bring-

ing to us all benediction, and to the Souls in Purgatory the greatest comfort. Besides all this the Church has also many smaller fountains of grace—the Sacramentals. How well the Church cares for her children from the first moment of their life to the last dread hour! Truly, if any child of the Church is lost the Church is not to be blamed!

But tell me, from whom has the Church received such rich treasures of grace?—Christ Himself was once a High Priest: everywhere did He distribute graces. He blessed the little children and the grown up people. How often did He not pardon the poor sinners! At the Last Supper Jesus celebrated the first Holy Mass and gave Holy Communion to His Apostles. And finally, He offered the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross. This entire priestly power Jesus gave to His Apostles. When did He ordain them priests?—When did He give them the power of forgiving sins?—You see, therefore, that the Church still has Christ's priestly office and power. **Christ founded the Church to sanctify all men.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) The Church does even more for her children. In the life of man upon earth, there are many dangers. How easily you can lose the way to Heaven and be lost forever! Therefore the Church watches over all with the anxious care of a mother; therefore she gives us her commandments or laws. What are the Commandments of the Church?—Consequently the Church forbids the reading of bad books, which are dangerous to Christian Faith and life. The Church must also at times punish. Of course, it pains her very much to be obliged to punish her disobedient children. She cuts them off from the Church; she excommunicates them. She forbids them the Sacraments and the prayers of the Church; she denies them Christian burial. The Church has a perfect right to do this, for she must watch over the faithful as a shepherd watches over his flock, so that the wild wolf may not make his way

into the flock and plunder and murder the sheep and the lambs.

But whence has the Church obtained such power?—Jesus Himself was the Good Shepherd. He led and guarded the faithful with the tender care of a shepherd watching over his flock. He gave them commandments or laws. Sometimes, too, if it was necessary, Jesus punished and reprimanded severely. Thus in the beginning Christ Himself ruled and governed the young Church. That was the Shepherd's office of Christ over the Church. But the Saviour then conferred that office upon His Apostles. He gave them the power to bind and to loose, that is, to make laws and the power to excuse or dispense from the law. He gave them the power, too, to punish disobedient children. "He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." Jesus appointed St. Peter to the office of Chief Shepherd. The Apostles, therefore, were to continue to feed and guard the flock of Christ, that is, to lead the faithful, to rule and govern the Church. **Christ founded the Church to govern all men.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

d) The Church teaches us as a good mother teaches her children. The Church dispenses the graces of Christ to us through the Holy Mass and the Sacraments as a good father gives bread to his children. The Church leads and guides us as a good shepherd leads and guides his flock. The Church never grows tired or weary of this noble work as long as we live upon earth. But why has the Church such motherly love and such fatherly care and such a shepherd's watchfulness?—Because the Church exercises the office of Christ, Her Divine Founder. Christ says: "As the Father sent Me, I send you." Why did the Father send the Son into the world?—Jesus Christ was to be our Teacher, Priest and Shepherd, Who was to lead us to the Father in Heaven. The Church has now to perform the very same work. She teaches as Christ taught; she offers Sacrifice as Christ offered Sacrifice;

she governs as Christ governed; she saves us from sin and Hell as Christ saved us by His sufferings and death, for He has committed all power and grace into her keeping. **Christ founded the Church to save all men.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* In the Church, therefore, Christ continues to live and to exercise His threefold office: the office of teaching, of sanctifying, of governing. Consequently we can say in all truth: the Church is Christ living visibly on earth ever teaching, ever offering Sacrifice, ever governing His Church, ever saving men from sin and eternal death.

2. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind. By His life, sufferings and death He satisfied God's justice, which men had grievously offended by sin, and gained grace for all. There is, therefore, no salvation except through Jesus Christ. Consequently St. Peter says: "There is no other name under Heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts of Ap. iv. 12.) It is Jesus' grace, which He earned for us on the cross, that saves us from sin and Hell. His grace helps us to walk on the road that leads to our eternal home. But where is that grace to be found?—Where can we obtain this most precious treasure?

Dear children, divine grace is given us through the Holy Sacraments, which are the channels of grace, and through prayer. The Sacraments are administered through the Church, which Jesus Himself has founded. For example, through Holy Baptism our soul is cleansed from original sin; through Holy Confirmation our soul is strengthened in the Faith; through Holy Penance the other sins, which we may have committed after Baptism, are taken away. And the same is true of the other Sacraments. Then the Church prays for us, too. Indeed she offers to God the most sublime, the greatest, the mightiest prayer that can be offered to God—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. For the Mass is the Sacrifice of prayer or petition of the Son of God Himself—a prayer of infinite value and power. Thus the Church opens up for her children a fountain of

graces, which can never be exhausted, from which we can draw freely. Yes, in Christ's Holy Church the living fountains of divine grace flow in abundance day after day from the cradle to the grave, to make men's souls holy and pleasing to God and to prepare them for Heaven. How then can we share in the fruits of the Redemption?—**The means instituted by our Lord to enable men at all times to share in the fruits of the Redemption are the Church and the Sacraments.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. a) If Christ placed the fountains of divine grace in the keeping of the Church; if He founded the Church to teach, govern, sanctify and save all men, it is clear, that all men are bound to belong to the Church. The holy Bishop, St. Cyprian, who died about the year 258, believed this same truth and preached it in the beautiful words: "He cannot have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his Mother." He means to say, that he cannot come to God, the Father, in Heaven, who will not allow himself to be led by the hand of Holy Mother Church. At the time of the deluge there was only one saving ark. So too, now there is only one saving ark—the Catholic Church. **All men are bound to belong to the Church.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Now let us suppose that there are men, who know very well, that our Church is the true Church. But they say to themselves: "I have been born and educated a Protestant. My parents, too, were Protestant. It is a shameful matter for me to leave the Faith of my fathers. Therefore I will not join the Catholic Church. People, too, will talk about me if I become a Catholic." What do you think of such people?—I will tell you what to think of them. If they continue as they are, they will surely be lost forever. A person, who knows the Church to be the true Church and refuses to join it, cannot be saved, for "outside the Church there is no salvation." The Catechism tells us the answer in these words: **He who knows the Church to be the true Church**

and remains outside of it cannot be saved. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

We must be ready to make every sacrifice to gain eternal life; for Heaven is worth everything. Moreover, is it really a shameful thing to leave the Faith of one's fathers and become a Catholic?—To a person, who makes such an excuse, you might say: "My dear friend, were not your forefathers one time Catholic, and did they not leave the Faith of their fathers? Was not that a thing to be ashamed of? But if you now recognize your mistake and become a Catholic, why should that be something to be ashamed of? No, to recognize the truth and to embrace it is not something to be ashamed of. But to refuse to accept the truth, that is indeed shameful and sinful."

But what about people who have never heard of the true Church? Can such people be saved?—They are in error without any fault of their own. God will not condemn such people. Perhaps most Protestants are in this condition. They have Protestant parents. As children at home and in the school and in the church they have heard it said: "We have the pure Gospel of Christ. Catholics adore the Mother of Christ and the Saints. They pay to have their sins forgiven. They believe and do many foolish things." So these Protestants grow up and so they live and die. They believe, of course, that they have the right faith. If they knew better, they would become Catholics. Such persons outwardly do not belong indeed to the true Church, but inwardly they are already children of our Holy Church. Therefore they can be saved, although it will not be so easy for them. If they live according to their conscience and love God above all things; if they die having sanctifying grace in their hearts, they will not be lost. God will help them to obtain sanctifying grace by an act of perfect charity or of perfect contrition for their sins. In God's sight, therefore, they belong to Christ's Church, even though outwardly they are not united to it. But why is it harder for such people to save their

souls than for a Catholic?—Because the Catholic Church is the direct way to Heaven, and the other churches are at most only an indirect way, or a round-about way, or the wrong way to Heaven. We Catholics have so many Sacraments and Sacramentals and the Holy Mass: the Protestants do not possess all these means of salvation. How poor they are! How sad is not their condition! Surely we Catholics ought to be deeply thankful to God for having made us members of the one true Church.

Write on the blackboard:

1. Christ founded the Church:
   a) to teach (teaching office)—Christian Doctrine class and sermons;
   b) to sanctify (priestly office)—Holy Mass and Sacraments;
   c) to govern (shepherd's office)—commandments and punishments;
   d) to save all men.
2. We share in the fruits of the Redemption—through the Church and the Sacraments.
3. "Outside the Church there is no salvation." All who are in error through their own fault cannot be saved.

Synthesis. We know what a holy purpose Jesus had in mind when He established the Church. The Church is to be our spiritual Mother, who is to lead us to Heaven. Christ wanted the Church to continue His work on earth to the end of time. What is the first reason, why He instituted His Church? How does the Church teach? What is this office called? What is the second reason? How does the Church sanctify? What is this office called? What is the third reason? How does the Church govern? What is this office called? What is the fourth reason? How can we obtain the fruits of the Redemption? Must all men belong to the Church? What of those who are not members of the

true Church through their own fault? What of those who are without the visible Church through no fault of their own? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. The Church has the duty and the office of teaching all men, for Christ has conferred that office and duty upon her in a most solemn manner. We, the children of the Church have, therefore, the duty of listening to the teachings of Holy Church and of believing them. But there are children, who have no interest or love for Christian Doctrine. There are many adults, too, who do not care to listen to sermons. That is a bad sign. Jesus once said: "Whoever is of God, heareth the word of God" (John viii, 47.) Therefore, whoever will not listen to God's word, is not of God. Of whom then is such a one?

2. The Church has the duty and the office of offering Sacrifice and of administering the Sacraments and thereby of conferring God's grace on men. The children of the Church have, therefore, the duty of assisting at Holy Mass and of receiving the Sacraments. For surely Christ did not give us the Mass and the Sacraments in vain. In what Commandments does the Church express her desire that we assist at Holy Mass and receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist?

3. The Church has the duty and the office of governing the sheep and the lambs of Christ's flock. We have the duty of obeying the Church's commandments. Whoever is unwilling to obey the Church, is a disobedient child not of the Church only, but also of God Himself. For Jesus says expressly: "He that hearth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke x, 16.) I believe, dear children, that you all wish to be good and obedient children of your heavenly Father. "You cannot have God for your Father, if you are unwilling to have the Church for your Mother."

4. We believe that our Church is the only Church that will save men. Of course, Protestants get angry

when they hear us say this and they deny that it is true. They claim that the Catholic Church condemns all men who are not Catholic to Hell-fire. But this is false. The Church does not condemn anyone to Hell. She leaves that to God, Who alone has the right to judge and to condemn. When the Church claims that she alone will save men, she does not mean to say *who* will be saved, but *what* will save men. Much less does the Church condemn Protestant children. What will happen to them, if they die after Baptism?—They will go directly to Heaven, for they die with sanctifying grace in their souls. There is only one Baptism, and whosoever receives it, is a child of the Church of Jesus Christ and belongs to the Catholic Church. The Church does not even condemn the heathens. How about grown up heathens?—They have the voice of God in their hearts. If they listen to that voice and live according to its teachings, they are true servants of God. They have already received the Baptism of desire and can be saved. But what about heathen children, who die without Baptism?—They are not children of God and, therefore, they cannot enter Heaven. But they will nevertheless obtain a Heaven in the other life, where there is much happiness. Of course, they will not obtain the true heavenly joy: they will never be allowed to see God face to face.

5. Show that you are true children of Christ's Church by always loving and obeying the Church. Keep her commandments just as you observe the commandments of God, for the Church is Christ Himself ever living in our midst to teach us, to sanctify us, to govern us, to open up the fountains of gace to us and to lead us safely to Heaven. Let us now promise loyalty and obedience and love to Holy Mother Church.

LESSON XXX.

The Attributes of the Church.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What do you mean by the authority of the Church? L. XII, Q. 123.
2) What do you mean by the infallibility of the Church? L. XII, Q. 124.
3) What do you mean by the indefectibility of the Church? L. XII, Q. 126.
4) Which are the attributes of the Church? L. XII, Q. 122.
5) In which Church are these attributes found? L. XII, Q. 133 (first half).

Preparation. Dear children, Jesus Christ came from His heavenly throne into this world in order to show us the way to Heaven. He returned to Heaven. The Church has taken over that work: she is our guide to Heaven. That is a very important truth. Let us review it briefly. *(Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson.)*—Have you ever seen this word "attribute"? *(Write the word on the blackboard.)* Undoubtedly you have time and again noticed how pure and white the newly fallen snow is. How lovely the shining whiteness of the snow appears to the eye, when the sunlight falls upon it! The white color of the snow, the whiteness of the snow, is something that we can say of the snow; is something that the snow has. We say: "The snow is white" or "the snow has whiteness." That white color of the snow, the whiteness of the snow, is an attribute of the snow. Now the Church, which Christ founded, also has certain attributes.

Aim. Today I am going to explain these attributes of the Church to you. I shall place two scenes from the life of Christ before you, and looking at these scenes carefully you will be able to understand which are the attributes of the Church and what they mean.

Presentation and Explanation. I. On the fortieth day after His glorious resurrection from the grave Jesus appeared, for the last time, to His Apostles in Jerusalem. He led them out to Mount Olivet. He was about to leave this world and return to the Father. These are His last words to His chosen disciples. "All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 16s.) "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: he that believeth not, shall be condemned" (Mark xvi, 16.) After Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His hands and blessed His Apostles. Then He slowly arose from the earth and ascended into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of God, the Father.

1. Dear children, these words of our Blessed Saviour are His last solemn commission to His dearly beloved Apostles. "All power is given to me in Heaven and on earth." Yes, Jesus, the Son of God, is true God like the Father and, therefore, possesses the fullness of power just like the Father Himself. Now this power Jesus bestows upon His chosen Apostles, for He says to them in the clearest manner: "Going, therefore, *teach* ye all nations." What power, then, did Jesus confer upon His Apostles?—He bestowed upon them the right and the power of teaching, that is, the right and power of announcing the Gospel to all nations. "Teach ye all nations." All men must believe what the Apostles teach in the name of Christ, for "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be condemned," says Christ.

Jesus then adds the words: "Teaching them to *observe* all things whatsoever I have commanded you." What power then did Jesus confer upon His Apostles? —He bestowed upon them in the second place the right and the power of leading and guiding the faithful in

regard to what they must believe and do, in order to be saved. He gave them the right and the power of commanding and of making laws, the right and the power of governing the faithful. "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." On a previous occasion the Saviour had said the very same thing to His Apostles in the words: "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in Heaven" (Matt. xviii, 18.) Jesus meant to say: "If you, Apostles, give commandments or make laws in regard to what men are to believe and do, in order to be saved, all men are bound to obey those commandments or laws, otherwise they cannot be saved. For when you make laws or excuse from them in My name, it is just as though I Myself in Heaven had made those laws or excused from them." You see, therefore, that Jesus gave to His Apostles the right and the power of teaching and governing the faithful in His name. Now instead of saying the words "the right and the power of teaching and governing the faithful," we can say the one word "the *authority* to teach and govern the faithful." Therefore Christ gave to His Apostles the authority to teach and govern the faithful in matters that concern the things, which they must believe and do, in order to be saved. When the Apostles teach and govern the faithful, it is just as though Christ Himself teaches and governs. The Apostles teach and govern by Christ's authority.

Now, of course, the Apostles could not do this alone. They were not able to go into the whole world and to all nations to the end of the world, for to be able to accomplish this great work, they would have had to live many hundreds of years. Therefore Jesus meant to say: "You, My Apostles, go as far as you can among the nations of the world, and wherever you yourselves cannot go, send other men to take your places and to represent you. Give to these, *your successors*, the same power and the same right of teaching and governing, that you possess from Me." You see, therefore, that

Jesus promised to be with the Apostles and with their successors or representatives to the end of the world. "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." That is to say: "Teach and govern the faithful in My name and by My authority, and if you, My Apostles, bestow that authority upon other men, and these your successors or representatives give that authority to other men to the end of time, behold, I am with you and with these successors even to the end of the world."

But who are these successors or representatives of the Apostles? They are the Bishops of the Catholic Church, as we have already learned. Who is the successor of St. Peter, the Chief of the Apostles and the visible Head of the Church?—The Pope, the Bishop of Rome. Therefore the Pope and the Bishops, as the lawful successors of St. Peter and the other Apostles, have the right and the power, the authority, to teach and to govern the faithful in Christ's name. What then can we say of the Pope and the Bishops of the Catholic Church?—They are authorized by Christ Himself to teach and govern the faithful. What have they?—They have divine authority. Authority, therefore, is an attribute of the Church of Christ. **By the authority of the Church I mean the right and the power, which the Pope and the Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, have to teach and to govern the faithful.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. Dear children, you and I by the grace of God belong to the Church which possesses the right and the power, the authority, to teach and govern the faithful. The Protestant churches have no right and power, no authority, to teach and govern the faithful, for their pastors and teachers are not the successors or representatives of St. Peter and the Apostles; neither can they show that they hold any authority from Christ and the Apostles. They did not exist from the beginning of the Church, for the Protestant religion began

only four hundred years ago. **The attribute of authority is found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone.** *(Repeat together).*

II. Now let us look at another scene in the life of our Blessed Saviour.

a) One day while Christ and His Apostles were near the Lake of Genesareth, in the neighborhood of a certain city called Caesarea Philippi, the Redeemer looking into the distant future thought of the time when He was to depart from this world and return to the Father in Heaven. He was to go away from the company of His disciples and the faithful, but His teachings and commandments were to remain forever. For all men were to be saved through Jesus' doctrines and commandments. How the devil and Hell would try to destroy Jesus' teachings and lead men to perdition by lies and wicked errors! While the Saviour was thinking of all these things, He saw clearly, too, the Church, which He was to found. This Church was built upon a rock and against that rock the powers of Satan and Hell would be as weak and helpless as the waves of the sea beating against the mighty rock, that stands forth boldly and unshaken above the raging waters. Then Jesus turned to Peter and said those memorable words: "I say to thee, that thou art Peter (a rock), and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi, 18).

Dear children, Christ knew very well that the devil and Hell wanted the Church to lose the true Christian Faith, the true doctrines of Jesus, whereby men learn to know the way to Heaven. The Saviour saw that Satan is desirous that the Church should teach false doctrines and wicked errors. For then the Church of Christ, the congregation of all who believe the true doctrines of Christ, would be destroyed. All Hell would rejoice and triumph. But that could never happen, as Jesus Himself had promised. "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it," said Christ. Indeed, if the Church fell away from the right doctrine of Christ,

this promise of the Saviour would be false. But that cannot be, for Jesus is God, Truth Itself, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Therefore the Church can never make a mistake, when she teachs what we must believe to be saved—when she teaches a doctrine of faith; neither can the Church fall into error, when she teaches us what we must do to be saved—when she teaches us a doctrine of morals. Now we can say this in one word: "The Church of Christ is infallible." What then can we say of the Church?—What then has the Church of Christ?—*Infallibility.* Therefore infallibility is an attribute of the Church. **By the infallibility of the Church I mean that the Church cannot err, when it teaches a doctrine of faith or morals.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Yes, the Church cannot fall into error, cannot teach us what is untrue in matters of faith and morals. We know this, too, from St. Paul. Once he called the Church of Christ "the pillar and the ground of truth" (I Timothy iii, 15.) Our parish church has high and large pillars or columns. They carry or support safely and surely the whole roof of the church. St. Paul says: "The Church is the pillar of truth." That is to say, the Church supports safely and surely all the doctrines of Jesus Christ. It is the Church, that makes the teachings revealed to us by Christ to last and continue all through the ages. For if there were no Catholic Church, the doctrines of Christ would not have come down to us safely and surely. They would certainly have been destroyed; errors would without doubt have crept into the teachings of Jesus and destroyed them. Our parish church, too, has large and mighty foundations or ground work. Upon this foundation or ground work the whole building rests. St. Paul says: "The Church is the ground of truth." He means to say: "Christian truth rests upon the Church solidly and securely as upon a rock foundation, so that it cannot be destroyed." Therefore as long as the Church lasts, so long, too, will the teachings of Christ last in the Church.

Consequently as long as the Church endures, it will not teach anything false for otherwise the truth would no longer be with the Church; the building would be separated from the pillar and the foundation and the doctrines of Christ would perish. But this cannot happen, for Christ said: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass" (Matt. xxiv, 35.) Therefore if Christ's teachings are to continue to the end of the world, the pillar and the ground of truth, namely the Church, must continue; the truth must always rest on the Church, that is, the Church must always teach the truth—the Church can never err, when she teaches us a doctrine of faith or morals. In other words, the Church is infallible. What then can we say of the Church?—What has the Church? Infallibility is an attribute of the Church. *(Repeat the answer together as above. A more detailed proof of infallibility will be given in the lesson, which discusses the subjects or bearers of infallibility).*

2. Dear children, the Protestant churches do not even claim to be infallible, when they teach a doctrine of faith or morals. Neither are Protestants obliged to believe what their pastors tell them in matters of faith or morals, for every Protestant may read the Bible and interpret or explain it to suit himself according to his own private judgment. Therefore both pastors and people have, as a matter of fact, changed their beliefs time and again. How different is it not in regard to the Church of which you and I are members! This Church cannot err, when it teaches a doctrine of faith or morals. It has always taught the genuine doctrine of Jesus Christ, for it is His mouthpiece. **The attribute of infallibility is found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

III. a) Just recall that first scene, where Jesus took leave of His Apostles on Mount Olivet on Ascension Thursday. Listen again to His solemn words: "Going therefore teach ye all nations—And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

Dear children, that was Jesus last will and testament to the first teachers, priests and shepherds of His Church. The Saviour commands them to teach, sanctify and govern the faithful in His name and by His authority. This is indeed a great work, a holy office, which the Apostles and their successors have to perform. It requires great patience, courage and strength. It demands powers that are more than human. Therefore Jesus promised to give them a divine and a perpetual assistance or help "all days even to the consummation of the world." He Himself says: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Now if Jesus is to remain with the Apostles and their successors to the end of time, the Church, as Christ founded it, will never cease to be, will last to the end of time. Moreover, at the Last Supper Jesus promised to send to the Apostles and their successors, the Holy Spirit, Who would remain with the Church forever. "I shall ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete, Who will remain with you forever" (John xiv, 16), were the very words that Jesus spoke to His Apostles. Now if the Holy Ghost is to remain with the Church "forever," the Church, as Jesus founded it, cannot be destroyed, will surely last to the end of the world. With Jesus and the Holy Ghost present in the Church to the end of time, it is impossible for the Church to be destroyed or to perish. Now we can say this in one word: "The Church is indefectible." What is the Church?—What then has the Church?—The Church has *indefectibility.* Therefore indefectibility is an attribute of the Church. **By the indefectibility of the Church I mean that the Church, as Christ founded it, will last to the end of time.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Look again at the second scene, which took place in the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi, and listen attentively to the words of Christ to St. Peter. "Amen I say to thee, that thou art Peter (a rock) and upon

this rock I will build My Church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it."

Dear children, Christ was thinking about founding His Church. He saw the awful attacks that would be made against His Church. But He was determined that all these attacks of the devil should be powerless and in vain. Therefore like a wise architect Jesus prepared for these days of trial and persecution. Did you ever watch men building a house?—They always dig deeply and lay large stones in the foundation or groundwork, so that the building may rest upon a solid foundation. When the strong winds and the rain and the snow come and beat against that house, they can do nothing to shake or destroy it, for it is built upon a rock foundation. So too, Jesus built His Church upon a rock foundation, for He wanted that Church to last to the end of time. Consequently no matter what storms and winds and rain and snow strike against the Church, all will be in vain, for the Church rests solidly upon a rock. Thus the Church will be strong from without and from within. In other words, the Church, as Christ founded it, will last forever. There will always be a Pope, Bishops and Priests and faithful in the Church. God's revealed doctrines will always be found pure and whole in the Church. The means of grace will never be found wanting in the Church. The Church of Christ is indefectible. What then is the Church?—What has the Church?—Indefectibility is an attribute of the Church. *(Repeat together the answer as above).*

The archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that Christ's kingdom, the Church, would last forever. "Of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i, 33.) "The Church," says St. Ambrose, "is like the moon; it may wane, but never be destroyed; it may be darkened, but it can never disappear." "The bark of the Church," says St. Anselm, "may be swept by the waves, but it can never sink, because Christ is there."

Now tell me, which are the attributes of the Church?

The attributes of the Church are three: authority, infallibility, and indefectiblty. *(Repeat together).*

2. Dear children, the Protestant churches began only four hundred years ago and many of them have already ceased to be. Not one of them is the same today as it was at the beginning. They are all continually changing in doctrine, in government and in the means of grace. If their founders were to come into the world today, they would not recognize their churches, so changed are they. On the other hand, the Catholic Church is the same today as it was when Jesus founded it over nineteen hundred years ago. It has indeed grown larger and stronger, but it is the same Church, the same in doctrine, the same in government, the same in the means of grace. **The attribute of indefectibilty is found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone.** *(Repeat together).*

Now tell me, in which Church are these attributes found? **These attributes are found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone.** *(Repeat together).*

Write on the blackboard:

Attributes of the Church:

1. *Authority*—the right and power of Pope and Bishops to teach and govern the faithful.
2. *Infallibility*—the Church cannot err, when she teaches a doctrine of faith or morals.
3. *Indefectibility*—the Church, as Christ founded it, will last to the end of time.

These attributes—found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone.

Synthesis. The Church is indeed a most wonderful institution. What can we say about the Church? What has the Church that makes it different from every other institution? It has certain attributes. What is the first attribute called? Who gave the Apostles this power and right? Who else has this power besides Peter and the Apostles? What is the second attribute called? What words of the Saviour tell us this truth? What does St.

Paul say of the Church? What is the third attribute that Christ gave to his Church? How do we know that the Church will last forever? Which are the attributes of the Church? In which Church are these attributes found? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. The Pope, Bishops and Priests of the Catholic Church have received the special gift of authority from Jesus Christ. They are divinely authorized to continue Jesus' work upon earth, which the Apostles began in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore we must believe the doctrines of faith and morals, which they teach, for it is Jesus Christ Himself, Who teaches through them. Therefore we must receive from their hands the treasure of divine grace, through the Sacraments and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, for it is Jesus Himself, Who administers the Sacraments and offers the Holy Sacrifice through them. Therefore, we must obey their commandments for it is Jesus Christ, Who governs through them. Dear children, never forget these important words of Jesus: "He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." The Church commands us to hear Mass on Sundays and Holydays of obligation. If you do not obey this law of the Church, you are like a heathen and a publican in the sight of God. The Church commands that you keep the days of fast and abstinence. If you break the fast days or the Fridays, you are like a heathen and a publican. And so, in regard to all the other commandments of the Church. Whoever refuses to obey the Church, refuses to obey Christ Himself.

2. The Church is infallible when she teaches a doctrine of faith or morals. Now we understand better the questions that we have learned before concerning our holy Faith. What must a Catholic believe?—Which Church has the true Faith, that was taught the world through Jesus Christ?—Why has the Catholic Church alone the true doctrines of Christ?—The Church is the infallible teacher of truth. She can teach only the truth.

How happy we are in comparison with those many peoples, who still wander in the darkness and look in vain for the truth! We have the truth and the light. We know where to find the full truth. "Thanks be to God! that I am a Catholic." The true Faith is a great grace. Therefore we ought to awaken that Faith in us, in order that it might not gradually disappear from our hearts. Make an act of Faith every day of your life.

3. The Church of Christ has the heavenly attribute of indefectibility. She has been in the world for nearly twenty centuries. She saw various empires and kingdoms come into existence and perish. But she lives on. Never has the Church been free from persecutions. They began with the Pharisees and the other Jews. Then came the Ten Persecutions in the Roman Empire, which drove the Church into the catacombs. The pagan writers persecuted the young Church. Then false teachers arose and tried to destroy the Church's teachings and life. Mohammed persecuted the Church. Christian kings and princes attacked her. The so-called Reformers of the XVI century persecuted the Church bitterly. Their heresy spread far and wide. A part of Germany gave up the Faith. England renounced the true Faith. The French Revolution attacked and martyred the Church. In practically every country of the world up to the present day the Church was continually subject to persecutions of the most devilish kind. And yet, notwithstanding all this, the Church continues to flourish and grow stronger. When she loses in one part of the world, she more than gains in another. Or we may say, she is both losing and gaining at the same time. She comes out of every persecution purified, stronger, more vigorous and crowned with victory. It must be so, for Christ and the Holy Ghost are ever with her. The Church is built upon a rock.

LESSON XXXI.

The Infallible Church.

Catechetical Unit:

1) When does the Church teach infallibly? L. XII, Q. 125.

2) In whom are these attributes found in their fullness? L. XII, Q. 127.

3) From whom does the Church derive its undying life and infallible authority? L. XII, Q. 134.

Preparation. Dear children, we have seen in the last lesson that Christ Himself bestowed certain heavenly attributes upon His Church which distinguish that Church from every other institution. The attributes are found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone. Let us review these truths. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.)*—The Church is our teacher in matters of faith and morals. Christ laid this great and sacred task upon her. But how can the Church always teach the truth?—And when disputes arise in matters of religion, how can the Church always decide correctly?—A mere man can not do this, for every man can and does fall into error. Some special help is required on the part of the Church, when she exercises her teaching authority. Who is infallible in the Church and how did Christ provide that His Church might always be able to preserve the truth?

Aim. Today I am going to explain to you more in detail: When the Church is infallible and who keeps her free from error.

Presentation. In the year 1869 Pope Pius IX called all the Bishops of the world together in the city of Rome. There in the Vatican (the residence of the Pope) a general meeting or council of the Church was to be held. For there were many false teachings spread among the people. It was necessary to set things in order again. The council was solemnly opened on the eighth of December. The Holy Father himself gave

an address or sermon to those present. He greeted the venerable Fathers and expressed how glad he was to see the Bishops of the whole world gathered about him. Then the assembled Bishops began to discuss the false teachings of men and the true doctrine of the Church. It was indeed a very difficult task. But they continued their discussions faithfully up to the 18th of July, 1870. On this day the last solemn meeting or session was held. A venerable and mighty gathering had come together in St. Peter's church. Five hundred and thirty-five Bishops were present. Then the Pope arose and, as the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, solemnly announced the decrees of the council. The most important teachings are the following: "Christ has made St. Peter to be the Head of the whole Church. The office of St. Peter continues forever in the Church. The Pope is the successor of St. Peter. All Christians must obey him. The Pope is infallible, when he, as Chief Shepherd and Teacher of the whole Church, speaks to all the faithful in matters of faith or morals. Whoever does not believe this, but contradicts this teaching, is excommunicated from the Church."

Just as soon as the Holy Father had announced these teachings a shout of jubilation arose in St. Peter's church, the likes of which had never been heard before. Applause went up from thousands and thousands of hearts; clapping of hands and waving of handkerchiefs made a sight truly wonderful to behold. And after the first shout of triumph had died down, the jubilation broke forth anew, so great was the joy of all. Thereupon a solemn Te Deum was sung. All the Bishops joined in this song of praise and the people sang with joy: "Holy God, we praise Thy name!" At the same time the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed outside the church, as though God in Heaven above wished to say: "Amen,—yes, it is so!"

Explanation. 1. a) At the meeting of the Church held in the Vatican at Rome there were many hundreds of Bishops present together with the Pope at

their head. The Pope and the Bishops of the Catholic Church are the teaching Church. When they meet, in order to discuss important matters concerning what we must believe and do to be saved, they form a general (oecumenical) council. Therefore the meeting of the Pope and the Bishops in the Vatican at Rome was a general council of the Church. At the Vatican Council, as it is called, the Pope and the Bishops discussed the doctrines of faith and morals to be held and practised by the faithful. What doctrines did they teach? —Now all these teachings were infallible, divine truth. When then does the Church teach infallibly?— **The Church teaches infallibly when it speaks through the Pope and the Bishops united in general council and when it proclaims to all the faithful a doctrine of faith or morals.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

But how do we know that this is really so? We know it, because 1. Christ Himself, the Founder of the Church, has said so expressly. Just before His ascension into Heaven Jesus said to His Apostles :"Go into the whole world and teach ye all nations—and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 19s.; Mark xvi, 15.) Do you hear?—Christ will be with Peter and the Apostles to the end of the world. But how can that be?—They are certainly not living to the end of the world! Jesus wishes to say: "I am with you, Apostles, and with your successors—with the Pope and the Bishops." But why does Christ remain with them?—Just consider carefully what Jesus says: "Teach—and I am with you." Therefore when the Pope and the Bishops teach, Christ is with them, so that they may not fall into error, so that they cannot teach what is not true. But notice: Christ said this to all the Apostles together with Peter at their head. An individual Bishop is, therefore, not infallible. And even though all the Bishops come together, without the Pope, they are not infallible. For to the teaching Church belongs in a special manner the

Head, the Pope. Therefore when the Pope is with the Bishops, Christ is with them too. When the venerable Fathers of the council were assembled at the Vatican, Christ was with them too. What they taught, Christ taught. But where Christ is, there can be no error, for He is truth itself. You see, then, that the Church is infallible, for Jesus has promised: "I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Jesus still lives and teaches in the Church, especially when the Pope and the Bishops are united in a general council.

We know that this is so, because 2. Christ has promised to send the Holy Ghost to His Church to remain with it forever. On Holy Thursday night after the Last Supper Jesus in most beautiful and touching words consoled His chosen disciples, the Apostles, for they were grieved at the thought that their beloved Master was about to leave them. "Let not your heart be troubled," Jesus said to them. (John xvi, 1.) "I will ask the Father and He will give you another Paraclete, that He may remain with you forever, the Spirit of truth" (v. 16, 17.) "The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your minds, whatsoever I shall have said to you" (xvi, 26.) "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth" (xvi, 13.) Therefore the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, is to come to the Apostles and St. Peter and is to remain with them and with their successors all days even to the end of the world, "forever." He will teach them the truth. He will watch over them, so that they will be able to preserve the true doctrine of Jesus faithfully; so that they will teach forever the truth and nothing but the truth. Can the Church, the Pope together with the Bishops, teach anything false as long as the Holy Ghost is with them?—If the Church taught any errors; if the Pope together with the Bishops announced what Jesus Christ did not teach; if they fell away from the truth, would the Spirit of

truth, the Holy Ghost, still be with them?—No, the spirit of falsehood, of untruth, of error, would be in the Church instead of the Spirit of truth. Then the promise of Jesus Christ would be false. But this can not be, for Christ is God and truth itself, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

When was the promise of Jesus Christ fulfilled?—On the Feast of Pentecost. For on that day the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles. He still lives with the Church just as the soul is with the body. Where the Spirit of truth is, there there can be no error, no falsehood. This Spirit of truth assisted or helped the Pope and the Bishops in the council of the Vatican, so that they could not make a mistake in the matter of faith or morals. The same thing took place at the Vatican Council that occurred at the Council of Jerusalem in the days of the Apostles. About eight years after the ascension of Our Blessed Saviour into Heaven, a dispute arose among the Christians of the city of Antioch to the north of Jerusalem as to whether converts from paganism to Christianity were obliged to observe the Jewish law. Paul and Barnabas immediately answered that the Christian converts were not obliged to keep the Jewish law, in order to be saved. But they wanted to be absolutely sure as to what the Church taught in this matter. Therefore they determined to go to Jerusalem and lay the matter before the Apostles and St. Peter. Accordingly they went to Jerusalem. After they had arrived the Apostles and the Elders came together in a meeting or council. St. Peter presided over this meeting and directed the order of business. St. Peter arose and said: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burdens upon you" (Acts of Ap. xv, 28.) So, too, the Fathers of the Vatican Council could say, for the Holy Ghost spoke and taught through their mouth. You see again, therefore, that the Church is infallible, for Christ has promised: "The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, will be with you forever." The Holy Ghost is the great

Teacher of the Church. Therefore 2. our Catechism says: **The Church derives its undying life and infallible authority from the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, Who abides with it forever.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) In the Vatican Council several doctrines of faith were announced in a solemn manner to all the world. Which one of these strikes you especially?—It is the teaching, which says, that the Pope is infallible. Of course many people were scandalized at this doctrine and fell away from the true faith and the Church (Old Catholics.) They thought that this is an entirely new doctrine. But in reality it is a very old teaching. We have learned that doctrine from Christ Himself. After the Last Supper while the Apostles were with Jesus on the way to the Garden of Olives, Jesus said to Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke xxii, 31s.) That is a strange saying. I do not suppose that you understand it. Listen, therefore, carefully and I will explain it to you. In the East it is customary to purify the wheat by means of a sieve. The wheat is shaken violently to and fro. The chaff remains in the sieve, but the kernels of wheat fall to the ground. "In like manner Satan wishes to do to you," says Christ to His Apostles. "Satan desires to confound you and make you go wrong in the Faith. But you, Simon, will never lose the Faith; you, Peter, will never err in matters of faith or morals, for I have prayed to the Father for you. You must also confirm or strengthen the other Apostles, your brethren, in the faith." From these words of Christ we see that St. Peter, the first Pope, is firm and infallible in the faith. So it always will be in the Church of Christ. The Pope, successor of St. Peter, will always be kept strong in the faith through the powerful help of Jesus. The Pope will be kept infallible, when he teaches all the faithful in matters of

faith and morals. Our Catechism says: **The Church teaches infalliby through the Pope alone, when he proclaims to all the faithful a doctrine of faith or morals.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

We know that this teaching is true for another reason. You remember that Christ said to St. Peter and to his successors, the Popes, these words: "Thou art Peter (a rock) and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it." The Pope is now and ever will be the foundation rock, upon which the Church of Christ is built. If the Pope could teach something false in matters of faith or morals, he would be a poor foundation indeed, and the whole Church would be destroyed. You recall also that Jesus said to Peter and to Peter's successors, the Popes, these words: "Feed My lambs; feed My sheep." The Pope is now and always will be the Chief Shepherd of Christ's flock, the Church. He is to lead the flock to good pastures. But if he himself could go wrong in the faith, if he could err in matters of faith or morals, he would be a poor Shepherd indeed; he would lead the lambs and the sheep of Christ into perdition. But that cannot be. Therefore the holy Council of the Vatican was right, when it solemnly defined the teaching: "The Pope is infallible." When then does the Church teach infallibly?—*(Repeat together as above).*

Of course many people have misunderstood this doctrine and many people still do not understand it correctly. They think that the Pope cannot commit sin. How is it possible, that people can talk so foolishly?—The Pope must go to confession just like every other child of the Church. Every day he says in the Confiteor of the Mass the words "mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa," that is, "I have sinned through my fault, through my fault, through my exceedingly great fault." Other people think that the Pope can not err at all, not even in worldly or temporal matters. Of course he can. He is not all wise (omniscient) and, therefore, he can make mistakes just like other men.

It is only when he speaks to all the faithful as Chief Shepherd of the Church in matters of faith or morals, that he cannot make a mistake. What then does the Church teach concerning the infallibility of the Pope? —*(Repeat the answer together as above).*

Now let us put these two parts together. When does the Church teach infallibly?—**The Church teaches infallibly, 1) when it speaks through the Pope and the Bishops, united in general council, or 2) through the Pope alone when he proclaims to all the faithful a doctrine of faith or morals.** *(Repeat together).*

3. The Vatican Council declared that the Pope alone, even without the other Bishops, is infallible, when, fulfilling the office of Chief Shepherd and Teacher of all the faithful, he defines a doctrine of faith or morals to be believed by all the Church. You know the reason. Jesus promised to St. Peter and to his successors, the Popes, the special assistance of the Holy Spirit, Who would teach all truth in the Church to the end of time. Are the Bishops alone infallible?—No, they are not. It is only when they are united with the Pope that they enjoy infallible authority. You see, therefore, that Christ gave to St. Peter and to his successors, the Popes, the fullness of *authority* to teach Bishops, priests and people in matters of faith and morals. Christ promised to St. Peter and his successors, the Popes, that when they exercise this teaching authority according to His will, they would be assisted by special help from Himself and the Holy Ghost. Jesus promised them the gift of *infallibility* in its fullness. Moreover, Jesus promised to St. Peter and his succesors, the Popes, that this infallible teaching authority would last *to the end of time.* Now we know in whom these three attributes of the Church are found in their fullness. **These attributes are found in their fullness in the Pope, whose infallible authority to teach bishops, priests and people in matters of faith or morals will last to the end of time.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. The teaching Church—infallible:
   a) the Bishops united with the Pope in general council in matters of faith or morals;
   b) the Pope alone, when he proclaims to all the faithful a doctrine of faith or morals.
2. The Holy Ghost—gives the Church its undying life and infallible authority.
3. The Pope has the fullness of authority, infallibility, indefectibility.

Synthesis. In the heavens there are two great lights: the sun and the moon. But the moon has its light from the sun. So too, there are two great lights, which give to us men interior light: Christ and the Church. But the Church has its light from Christ and the Holy Ghost. The Church is infallible. Why is the Church said to be infallible? When does the Church teach infallibly? How do you know that the Bishops, united with the Pope in general council, are infallible? Who gives the Church its infallible authority and its undying life? Who else teaches infallibly in the Church? How do you know that the Pope is infallible? Does that mean that the Pope is incapable of sin? of making a mistake in temporal matters? In whom are the three attributes of the Church found in their fullness? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. In the Vatican Council several doctrines of faith were solemnly decided. So the Church has often acted, when disputed questions concerning matters of faith or morals arose. Up to the present time twenty general councils have been held in the Church. I have already spoken about the Council of Jerusalem. In the year 325 the first general council was held at Nicea. In that council the Church condemned the false teachings of Arius, who denied that Jesus Christ was God. The Church defined, that Jesus Christ is indeed the true and only begotten Son

of God, and not merely a creature of God. He is God of God, light of light. That is Christian truth.—The greatest and most important of all the general councils is that held at Trent (1545-1563.) At that time Luther spread many false teachings. What was his chief heresy?—He taught that faith alone will save us. What other false teachings did he spread among the people?—He rejected the Holy Mass, the veneration of the Saints, Purgatory, the Sacrament of Penance, fasting and many other teachings and practises. Then the Church solemnly defined what was the true doctrine of Jesus in all these matters. Her word is infallible truth. When the Church speaks, God Himself speaks. "Where the Church is, there the Holy Ghost is," says St. Irenaeus.

2. In like manner when the Pope alone decides for the whole Church, what we must believe and do in order to be saved, his word is infallible truth. Thus it happened in the year 1854. Pope Pius IX first asked all the Bishops of the Catholic world, whether they believed that the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, was conceived and born without original sin. Nearly all answered: "Yes, that is what we believe." Then the Pope solemnly defined this doctrine of faith on the eighth day of December for the entire Catholic world. Now it is certainly true, for the Pope as Chief Shepherd and Teacher of the Church has so declared in the name and by the authority of Christ Himself. Here we can say the words, that St. Augustine once said, when a certain dispute arose in his day: "Rome has spoken, the matter is settled."

3. You see, therefore, dear children, how wonderfully our Blessed Saviour arranged His Church. He made His Church to be the "pillar and the ground of truth." He sent to her the Holy Spirit so that she might never fall into error in regard to doctrines of faith and morals. That Spirit of God abides with the Church forever; keeps her without error in matters of faith or morals. That Spirit of God gives her author-

ity to teach the faithful the way to Heaven. That Spirit of God keeps the Church ever young and fresh and beautiful year after year and century after century. The Holy Ghost is the fount and the source of the Church's undying life. Just recall again, dear children, how wonderfully Christ has arranged the Church in regard to its Chief Shepherd and Teacher. The Pope, the Vicar of Christ on earth, has the fulness of infallible authority and is the rock foundation upon which the Church rests—namely the Bishops, the priests and the faithful. As long as we remain united with the rock foundation, we shall weather all the storms of the wicked world and the attacks of the legions of Satan and Hell. Where Peter is, there the Spirit of Christ is and the Holy Ghost is. Where the Pope is, there the Spirit of Christ is and the Holy Ghost is. Where the Pope is, there the Church is. Let us promise Christ always to be faithful to the Pope and the Bishops of the Catholic Church. For "no one can have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his Mother!"

LESSON XXXII.

The Marks of the Church.

Catechetical Unit:

1) How is the Church One? L. XII, Q. 129.

2) How is the Church Holy? L. XII, Q. 130.

3 How is the Church Catholic or Universal? L. XII, Q. 131.

4) How is the Church Apostolic? L. XII, Q. 132.

5) Has the Church any marks by which it may be known? L. XII, Q. 128.

Preparation. Dear children, we Catholics know without the least shadow of a doubt what we must believe and do, in order to save our souls. For Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life still lives in our midst and teaches us in matters of faith and morals. Let us see

how He does this—*(Question the pupils on the preceding lesson.)*—Christ has founded a Church. There is absolutely no doubt about that. But besides the Catholic Church there are many other Christian churches. Now which ones do you know?—There is the Russian, the Greek, the Protestant church. Since the time of Christ more than two hundred new churches have sprung into existence. Therefore we must ask ourselves the question: "Which one of these many churches is the true Church of Jesus Christ"?—"How can we distinguish the true Church from the many false churches, the many counterfeit churches"?—The angel said to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem: "This day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find an Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger" (Luke ii, 11s). And the shepherds went and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger. And seeing they understood the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. The Infant "was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lay in a manger." For the Child Jesus was poor, and had not even a little cradle like other children, but only "swaddling clothes." Yes, the Divine Infant lay not indeed in a house, nor even in a room, but "in a manger" or stable. Thus did the angel describe the Divine Child to the shepherds. The angel pointed out the marks which belonged to the Infant Jesus and not to other children. The shepherds went to the stable and found the child, whom all these marks fitted. They found the right one, for they knew the child by the signs or marks that had been described by the heavenly messenger. So too, it is in regard to the Church of Jesus Christ. It too, must have certain signs or marks that will show at once and to anyone that it and no other church is the true Church of Christ.

Aim. Today I am going to explain to you the marks which show us the true Church of Jesus and distinguish it from all other false and counterfeit churches.

Presentation.

I. The Unity and the Holiness of the Church.

An architect wishes to build a church. What is the first thing that he does?—He thinks about the church he intends to build; he makes a plan or drawing of the church in his own mind. Then he sits down and draws everything carefully and in detail on paper: how deep the foundations, how high and long and wide the church is to be. Only then does he begin to build. The plan is the picture of the real church.

Now Jesus Christ is an architect. But He has built a living Church. Did He not Himself say the words: "Upon this rock I will build My Church"?—Jesus, too, drew a plan of His Church. He foretold how His Church was to look, and the Apostles wrote the plan on paper very carefully. We can even now after nineteen hundred years read the plan of Christ's Church in the Gospels. How then is the Church of Christ to look?

While Jesus was on the way to the Garden of Olives on Holy Thursday night, He took a fond farewell of His disciples. He said to them: "I leave the world and go to the Father." Then He consoled them affectionately as a good and kind Father, and offered a solemn prayer for them. "Father," He said, "*sanctify* them in truth. Thy word is truth. As Thou has sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify (consecrate and offer) Myself: that they may also be *sanctified* in truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also, who through their word shall believe in Me: that they also may be *one*, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee: that they may also be *one* in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John xvii, 17s).

Explanation. *A. The Unity of the Church.*

1. Let us look at these words of the Lord a little more closely. Christ wanted to build a Church. He tells us that expressly: "Upon this rock I will build My Church." He laid only *one* foundation-rock, and He

says "upon this rock I will build *My* Church." What follows from these words of Jesus?—Evidently there can be but *one* Church of Christ. Christ foresaw and knew very well, that later on false teachers would come and found their own churches and say that they are the true Church of Christ. But none of these churches can be the true Church of Christ. For truth is *one;* there is only *one* Faith, and for this one truth, this one Faith, there is only *one* Church. **Christ has founded only one Church just as He taught only one Faith.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.)* Therefore the holy Bishop, St. Cyprian, who died about the year 258, said: "There is only one God and one Christ and one Chair (Church) founded on the rock by the word of the Lord."

2. The prayer, which Jesus recited on the way to the Garden of Olives, is sometimes called the "prayer of the High Priest," because the Lord Jesus offered it to God just before He offered His Sacrifice on the cross. Jesus, the High Priest for the sins of all the world, prayed from the depths of His Divine Heart to His heavenly Father for His beloved disciples. Still He expressly added the words: "Not for them (the Apostles) only do I pray, but for them also who through their (the Apostles') word shall believe in Me." Do you see?—Christ prayed for the whole Church, not for the Apostles only. He prayed for all the faithful.

There are two things that Jesus had at heart. Let us first look at the second petition of Jesus. He said: "Father, I pray Thee, that they all may be *one,* as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they may all be one in Us." Therefore the Church is to be *one*—that is what Jesus wants. Yes, that is to be a mark of His Church. For Jesus says: "that the world may believe, that Thou hast sent Me." But why does Christ pray so insistently and so solemnly?—Nothing is more important for His Church than that it should be one.

For if the Church is not one, then neither will there be any peace in the Church but only battles and discord. And where there is discord, everything must go to pieces. Jesus Himself said that in the words: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate: and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matt. xii, 25.) Yes, the Church cannot continue long, if its children do not agree with one another; if its members are not one mind and one heart, it will shortly be overthrown by the gates of Hell.

But in what ought the Church of Christ to be one? —Jesus tells us, for He says: "that they may all be *one in Us.*" He wants all the members of His Church to believe one and the same thing concerning Himself and God. Therefore all ought to be united in the one *Faith* in God and Christ. In the Bible we read that the first Christian converts "were persevering in the doctrine (Faith) of the Apostles" (Acts of Ap. ii, 42.) St. Paul, too, says to the Christians of Ephesus: "There is one Lord and one Faith" (iv, 5.) **The Church is One because all its members agree in one Faith.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Jesus founded His Church also to worship God and to save men by grace and the love of God. Therefore He wants His Church to be one in the worship of God and in the means of grace. But how can we worship God in the most perfect manner?—By Sacrifice. And what are the means of grace, that Christ gave to His Church?—The Sacraments. Therefore the Church of Christ ought to be one in *Sacrifice and the Sacraments.* Yes, Christ united the members of His Church most closely together in the communion of one Sacrifice and the same Sacraments. Our Catechism says: **The Church is One because all its members are in one communion.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

The Church must also be one in its *Head,*—namely in St. Peter. On another occasion Jesus said expressly: "There shall be one Shepherd and one fold"—one Head for the whole Church. The Church must be one

in government. **The Church is One because all its members are under one Head.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

How then must the Church of Christ be?—If a church is not one, it cannot be the true Church of Jesus. In what then must the true Church of Christ be one?—That is the first mark of the true Church of Jesus Christ: that it be one in Faith, in worship or communion, in government or Head. *(Have the pupils repeat the entire answer)*

B. The Holiness of the Church.

In the prayer, which Jesus, the High Priest, offered to God, He begged for another thing. At the very beginning of the prayer He says: "Father, *sanctify* them in truth! Thy word is truth." And immediately He says again: "I *sanctify* Myself for them, that they also may be *sanctified* in the truth." For what then does Jesus pray?—The Apostles and all the faithful are to be sanctified, or made holy. Therefore the Church of Christ is to be *holy*. But why is the Church holy?—Jesus says: "I sanctify Myself for them." **The Church is Holy because its founder, Jesus Christ, is holy.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

The children of the Church are all some day to be Saints in Heaven. But how can they become holy? How can they be made Saints? They are to be made holy through the truth, the doctrine, which Jesus gave to His Church. **The Church is Holy because its teaches a holy doctrine.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

In what other way are the children of the Church to become holy?—Through the grace, which Jesus earned for us by His death on the cross. But how can we obtain that grace?—Through the Holy Sacrifice and the Sacraments. The Church invites all her children to a holy life, especially by having them make use of the means of grace: the Holy Sacrifice and the Sacraments. Yes, **the Church is Holy because it invites all to a holy life.** *(Repeat together use the blackboard).*

That is how it ought always to be in the Church of

Christ: there ought always to be great saints in the Church. That is what Christ wishes and prays for. **The Church is Holy because of the eminent holiness of so many thousands of its children.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

How then must the Church of Christ be?—Therefore if a church is not holy, it cannot be the true Church of Christ. In what then must the true Church of Christ be holy?—That is the second mark of the true Church of Jesus: that it be holy in its founder, in its doctrine, in the means of grace, in the many thousands of its saints. *(Have the pupils repeat the entire answer).*

II. The Catholicity and Apostolicity of the Church.

Presentation. Now, dear children, just listen attentively to what I am going to tell you further. Christ offered Himself on the cross for His followers and arose again gloriously from the grave. The time was already at hand, when He was to leave this world and go to His home in Heaven. Before leaving the world He ordered His Apostles to meet Him on Mount Olivet. Then He gave them the solemn commission: "All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii, 19-20.) Then He left the world and His Apostles and ascended into Heaven.

Explanation. *A. The Catholicity of the Church.*

What command or commission did Christ give to His Apostles?—Consider carefully what Jesus said: "Teach ye *all* nations." The Church is to be for all peoples and for all times: it is to be everywhere and at all times in the world. Yes, that is what Christ wishes: that the Church should spread over the entire earth. His Church is to be *catholic or universal.* The word "catholic" comes from the Greek language and means in English "universal."

Just look at Christ on the cross; He hangs there with outstretched arms. He wishes thereby to tell us: "I have died for all men!" His Church, too, is for all men, to help all men to get to Heaven. The Church must be catholic. We see that very clearly from what happened on Pentecost—the birthday of the Church. On that occasion people from every country and nation under the sun were gathered together in Jerusalem, and after the Holy Ghost had come down upon the Apostles, each one of those strangers heard the Apostles speak in his own mother tongue. What does this miracle signify?—Thereby the Holy Ghost solemnly announced, that the Church is for all nations and for all times. **The Church is Catholic or Universal, because it subsists in all ages and teaches all nations.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

What else did Christ say to His Apostles?—"Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Yes, the Church is to teach all truth, the entire doctrine of Jesus. And to enable the Apostles to do this, Jesus promised to remain with them to the end of time, and to send the Holy Ghost to the Church, Who was to abide with the Church forever, as we have already learned. **The Church is Catholic, because it maintains all truth.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

How then must the Church of Christ be? If a church is not catholic or universal, it cannot be the true Church of Christ. That is the third mark of the true Church of Christ: that it be catholic or universal in time and place and doctrine. Therefore that it subsists in all ages, teaches all nations and maintains all truth. *(Have the pupils repeat the entire answer).*

B. The Apostolicity of the Church.

Christ committed His doctrine to the care of the Apostles, for He said to them: "Teach ye all nations." The Apostles, therefore, were the first teachers of the Church. Jesus founded His Church upon the Apostles. **The Church is Apostolic, because it was founded by Christ**

on the Apostles. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* But the chief foundation rock of the Church was, of course, St. Peter.

At the end of His speech Jesus added words that were very important and at the same time very consoling: "And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." But how can Christ be with Peter and the Apostles all days even to the end of the world?—What does He mean?—Christ will remain with the successors of St. Peter and the Apostles to the end of the world. Do you now understand what Christ wishes to say?—He founded His Church on St. Peter and the other Apostles. So it is to be forever: there must always be in Christ's Church a Peter and the Apostles, that is, a Pope and Bishops. They are to govern the Church. That is the will of Christ. **The Church is Apostolic, because it is governed by the lawful successors of the Apostles.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Christ addressed these words to His Apostles: "Teach ye all nations"; and again He commanded them solemnly: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The Lord's word, Christ's doctrine, is to last forever. His teachings are to be for all times. The true Church of Christ, therefore, must have the apostolic doctrine at all times; it must never cease to teach the doctrine, which the Apostles received from Christ. **The Church is Apostolic, because it has never ceased and never will cease to teach their doctrine.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

How then must the true Church of Christ be?—If a church is not Apostolic, it cannot be the true Church of Christ. In what then must the true Church of Christ be Apostolic?—That is the fourth mark of the true Church of Christ: that it be founded on the Apostles, be governed by their lawful successors and always teach their doctrines. *(Have the pupils repeat the whole answer).*

5. Has the Church any marks by which it may be

known? **The Church has four marks by which it may be known: it is One, it is Holy, it is Catholic, it is Apostolic.** *(Repeat together).*

Write on the blackboard:

The Marks of the Church:

1. *One*—in faith—in worship (communion of Sacrifice and the means of grace, Sacraments)—in government (under one Head).
2. *Holy*—in its founder—in its doctrine—in the means of holiness (the Sacrifice and the Sacraments)—in the great number of its Saints.
3. *Catholic*—subsists in all ages—for all nations—maintains all truth.
4. *Apostolic*—founded on the Apostles—governed by their lawful successors—always teaches apostolic doctrines.

Synthesis. Now we have a picture of the true Church of Christ. There is only one Church of Christ. The Lord Jesus founded only one Church as He taught only one Faith. How do we know this?—Has the Church any marks by which it may be known? What are they? The Church has these marks from Christ Himself. The second general council of the Church (the Council of Constantinople held in the year 381) tells us what these four marks are: "I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church." In what must the Church of Christ be one? holy? catholic? apostolic? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Christ gave four essential marks to His Church. Whoever is of good will, can find the true Church of Christ easily. And that is what Christ wanted too: all men are to find the true Church and to become children of His Church now on earth, and children of God in the future in the kingdom of Heaven.

2. Let us look back into the early Christian times. We have heard that since the time of Christ and the

Apostles more than two hundred new churches have come into existence. Many of these have already disappeared from the face of the earth a long time ago. You see at once, that none of these could have been the true Church of Christ, for the true Church of the Saviour can never cease to be. It is indefectible. In our own day there are many churches, all of which call themselves Christian churches. Each one claims to be the genuine Church of Christ. Now which of these is the true Church? The true Church of Christ can be only that one which has the four marks. We must, therefore, ask: "Which Church is one in Faith, one in worship, one in government? Which Church is holy in its founder, in its doctrine, in the helps it offers, in the great number of its saints? Which Church subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, maintains all truth? Which Church is founded on the Apostles, is governed by their lawful successors, still teaches the apostolic doctrine?" That is the task we set ourselves to do in the next lesson: to find the true Church of Jesus Christ.

LESSON XXXIII.

(I) The True Church of Christ.

Catechetical Unit:

In which Church are these marks found? L. XII, Q. 133 (first half).

Preparation. Dear children, you are already acquainted with the picture of the true Church of Jesus Christ. How does Christ want His Church to be?—*(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson.)* Now comes the important question, on the answer to which every thing depends: "Which Church has these four marks?" "Which Church bears the four seals as a proof of its divine origin?" "Which Church is the house, over which the four wonderful stars appear, as a sign that it is really the House of God, just as that

wonderful star from the East stood over the house in which the Divine Infant was?"—The answer is important, and for us it is indeed most consoling. Our Church, the Holy Roman Catholic Church, to which we belong by the grace of God, has these four marks, and it alone.

Aim. Today I am going to show you in detail that our Church is one and holy and, therefore, it and it alone is the true Church of Jesus. I shall take up the other two marks in the next lesson.

I. The Unity of the Roman Catholic Church.

Presentation. Every twenty-five years a solemn celebration occurs in Rome, the Eternal City. This festival is called the Jubilee celebration. Such an event took place in the year 1900, while Leo XIII was Pope. Hundreds of thousands of Catholics visited Rome on that occasion to share in that grand solemnity. They came from every part of the world. What a wonderful spectacle it must have been to see that great crowd of faithful Catholics come together in the center of Christendom! Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, members of religious orders and congregations clothed in their various habits, the laity, people from every station in life. Rarely could a throng so different in dress, in language, in customs, be seen gathered together the world over. And yet, this immense crowd formed but one great family, all united together most closely in the bonds of a common Faith and a common Charity. If you could look into their hearts, you would see the same living Faith; if you could listen to their words and watch their actions, you would see the very same profession of the common Faith. Each and all paid daily visits to the four great basilicas or churches: to the church of St. John Latern, to the church of St. Peter, to the church of St. Paul outside the walls of Rome, and to the church of St. Mary Major. They all assisted at the same Sacrifice, the Holy Mass; they all made use of the same means of grace—the Sacraments, espe-

cially Penance and the Holy Eucharist. They paid a visit to the tombs of the Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul. Their great desire was to obtain an audience with Leo XIII, the two hundred and fifty-seventh successor of St. Peter, the first Pope of the Church, and to renew their pledge of loyalty and homage to their common Head, the Father of Christendom. What a wonderful sight! Thousands of people, so different in everything, and yet, so united in Faith, in worship, in government! Surely here we see the prayer of Christ, the High Priest, fulfilled: "Father, I pray that they all may be one, as Thou in Me and I in Thee!" Here there is but one fold and one Shepherd.

Explanation. 1.a) Dear children, the first thing that strikes you in looking at this great gathering in Rome is the fact that all those hundreds of thousands of Catholics from every part of the world, believed the very same doctrines—their Faith was one and the same. And what those Catholics believed, that too, the Catholics throughout the world believe and profess. That is the bond that unites Catholics the world over. What prayer contains in short form the Faith that we profess?—The Apostles' Creed. You recited that Creed through your sponsors, when you were baptized. You renewed that same profession of Faith when you received your first Holy Communion and when you were confirmed. Wherever there are Catholics, there all profess the very same Apostles' Creed. Your book of Faith is the little Catechism, for it contains the doctrines, which all Catholics must believe and practise. The children of other countries also have a Catechism. The language in which it is written is, of course, different, but the doctrines are the very same the world over. And when missionaries go into pagan countries, they preach the very same Faith to the pagans, which you and I believe and profess. Our Church is everywhere one and the same in Faith. So it always was: so too, it always will be. In the Catacombs, those underground cemeteries, which extend for miles around the

city of Rome, many pictures and inscriptions have been found. These pictures and inscriptions tell us very plainly, that the early Christians believed the very same Faith that we believe and profess. Yes, **the Holy Roman Catholic Church is One, because all its members agree in one Faith.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

b) Is the Protestant Church also one in Faith?—Once a Protestant minister said: "I can write everything, in which we Protestants agree, on the nail of my thumb." Another said: "In the Protestant churches there is a confusion of language and Faith, that is truly deplorable. What one professes today, another denies tomorrow. If the one says "yes," the other says "no." Indeed there are many Protestants nowadays, who no longer believe in Jesus Christ. Many do not have their children baptized. And yet, they all claim to be Christians. Why they cannot be one in Faith, even if they want. Do you know why?—Because each one may search the Bible and explain (interpret) it as he wishes. To be sure, one will take this meaning from the Bible, while another will say that it means the very opposite. Therefore there are as many opinions among the Protestants as there are heads. Consequently the Protestant churches are not the true Church of Christ, for their members do not all agree in the one Faith.

2. a) The Catholics participating in the Jubilee celebration in Rome came from various parts of the world. And yet, they all worshiped God in the same manner. For they all assisted daily at the same Holy Sacrifice, the Mass, in one or the other of the churches I mentioned before. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is indeed sometimes celebrated with ceremonies different from those that we are accustomed to. For instance, among the Greeks and the Armenians the ceremonies are much different. But in the essential thing it is one and the same Mass: for there is an Offertory, a Consecration and a

Communion just as with us. Those Catholics at Rome made use of the same means of grace, which Christ Himself instituted to save men—the seven Sacraments. They gained the plenary indulgence and the many partial indulgences that go with the Jubilee, in order to be released from the temporal punishments due to their sins. So it is everywhere. Catholics in all parts of the world have the same seven Sacraments, no less and no more. They bring their children to be baptized; they go to confession and receive Holy Communion. Everywhere there are priests, who can absolve from sin, who can admonish the sinner and urge him to receive the Sacraments. You may go into whatsoever Catholic church you will, everywhere before the Altar of the Blessed Sacrament there is the perpetual light burning; everywhere there is the Tabernacle and in it the Son of God Himself. He is waiting for you; He knows you—in all Catholic churches of the entire world you are at home. So you see again: **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is One, because all its members are in one communion.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) But how about the Protestants?—Are they in one communion?—Have they one Sacrifice?—They have not the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass any more. Luther did away with the Mass and said that it was idolatry. Protestants do not worship God in the same manner. Some hold divine services in this way, some in that way. Are the Protestants one in the means of grace, the Sacraments?—Luther once said, that there were but two Sacraments; at another time he claimed that there were three Sacraments. Even nowadays Protestants are not all in one communion. Many do not want the Sacraments at all.

3. a) Let us now look at the Jubilee cerebration in Rome. All the Catholics visiting Rome paid a visit to the tomb of St. Peter, the first Pope. What else did they want to do?—They wanted to have an audience

with the Pope, the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible Head of the Church of Christ. They all called him "Holy Father" for he is indeed their spiritual Father and they are his children. As a sign of their affection for him they all remembered him in their prayers and in their offerings in time of need (Peter's Pence). Yes, we Catholics have a common father in spiritual matters, the Pope, the Bishop of Rome. All the faithful must obey him. Whoever refuses to do this is no longer a child of the Church. The Pope is the Shepherd, whose voice Catholics hear even to the ends of the earth: in Asia, in Africa, in America, in Europe, in Australia, in the frozen north and in the torrid south. The Bishops, too, must obey him. When a Bishop is chosen, he must first ask the Pope to acknowledge him as Bishop. Until he does this he may not be consecrated Bishop, neither may he exercise any power as Bishop in the Catholic Church. You see again: **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is One, because all its members are under one Head.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) How is it among Protestants?—They have no common Head. In every country there is a different head. The King or the prince is really their Pope. In other countries there is no head at all. Many Protestants recognize very well, that this is indeed a very harmful state of things for their Faith, but they cannot change it. The Protestant churches, therefore, are not the true Church of Christ.

Our Church then has the seal of unity; over our Church, the House of God, stands the first of those four heavenly stars. And how brightly it shines! It is visible far and wide! So clearly has our Church this divine mark, that her enemies stand in wonder at her marvelous unity. Why then is the Holy Roman Catholic Church One? *(Have the pupils repeat the entire answer together).*

II. The Holiness of the Roman Catholic Church.

Our Church has also the mark of holiness. Let me show you how this is so.

Presentation. In the year 1195 at Lisbon, in Portugal, a child was born into this world, who was destined to become a great saint in Christ's Church. His parents, pious and God-fearing Catholics, gave him the name of Ferdinand at Baptism. This little child from the first use of his reason loved to listen to his mother speaking of the Christ Child, of the saints and of Heaven. His greatest joy was to visit Jesus often in the Blessed Sacrament, to assist at Holy Mass and to receive the Sacraments frequently. Indeed when he was only fifteen years old, he resolved to leave the world and to enter the convent, where he could serve Christ with all his strength every moment of his life. For ten years he lived a life of wonderful piety, of prayer and of study of the Holy Scriptures. One day he saw the bodies of five Franciscan missionaries, who had suffered martyrdom in Morocco, Africa, brought to the Church of the Holy Cross near the convent where he was staying. At once his heart was set afire with the earnest longing to lay down his life for Christ. He obtained permission to enter the order of St. Francis of Assisi. He became a Franciscan monk in the year 1221, and took the name of Anthony. Then he started for Africa to preach the Gospel to the pagans. However, a severe fit of sickness compelled him to return to Italy. Here he continued to lead a most holy life in poverty, chastity and obedience. Although very talented, he never let anyone know how learned he was. For a long time he served in the kitchen of the convent washing the dishes and caring for the rooms and the ordinary house work. One day, however, the superior discovered the talents and learning of Anthony, and St. Francis ordered the saint to teach and preach.

Anthony began to preach to the people with such power and holy earnestness, that thousands of sinners

were converted from their evil ways and became holy men and women. He labored especially in the city of Padua, in Italy. One day some Italian heretics offered Anthony some poisoned food, but Anthony made that food harmless by making the sign of the cross over it. On another occasion a certain young man named Leonardo, in a fit of anger kicked his mother. Repentant Leonardo confessed his sin to Anthony, who said to him: "The foot of him that kicks his mother deserves to be cut off!" Leonardo went home and cut off his own foot. When Anthony had heard of this, he went to the young man and by a miracle joined the injured parts together and healed the foot. Anthony performed many other miracles during his life on earth; and even after his death, God continued to work miracles of various kinds through the prayers recited in honor of this great "wonderworker."

On the thirteenth of June, 1231, Anthony gave up his pure soul to God. A troup of little children ran through the streets of Padua crying out: "The saint is dead!" Thirty years after his death a magnificent church was built in Padua, and the relics of the saint were transferred to that church. When the vault, in which for over thirty years Anthony's sacred body had rested, was opened, the flesh was found reduced to ashes, but the tongue was incorrupt, red, and as fresh as it was while he was living. Thus did God Himself honor this faithful member of His Church in life and in death.

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, St. Anthony of Padua was a faithful member of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. This Church is God's work. That is absolutely certain, for Christ Himself is its holy Founder. This Church comes from the All-holy God, Jesus Christ. Therefore it, too, must be holy, good, and pleasing to God, for nothing unholy, wicked or sinful can come from the All-holy God. **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is Holy, because its Founder, Jesus Christ, is holy.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) But why did Anthony become the great saint that he is? Because he believed and practised faithfully what the Holy Roman Catholic Church teaches. Therefore the doctrines of the Holy Roman Catholic Church must be holy. And they are indeed holy, for they are the teachings of God Himself, which Christ has revealed to us. It cannot be otherwise, for the Holy Ghost abides with the Church forever. What are some of these doctrines?—The Ten Commandments of God are also the commandments of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Besides these the Church has given us Six Commandments, all of which are intended simply and solely to make our souls holy and pleasing in God's sight. What does the Church forbid?—It forbids all mortal sins; for by such sins sanctifying grace is lost. It forbids also all venial sins; for they, too, are an offence against God, although they are not as grievous as mortal sins. The Catholic Church teaches and commands in God's name, that all its children pray zealously, that they attend divine service, especially the Mass, on all Sundays and Holydays of obligation under pain of mortal sin; that they fast and perform works of charity; that they confess their sins; that they receive the Sacraments; that they be ready to die rather than offend God by a single venial sin. The Church wants to obtain complete purity of heart from all sins for all its children; the Church strives to make us all children of God on earth, who are in their hearts already living with God in Heaven. Surely a Church that teaches such holy doctrines must itself be holy. **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is Holy, because it teaches a holy doctrine.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) But how about the Protestant churches?—Protestants, of course, claim that Christ is the founder of their churches. But this is not true. For their church is only the work of man, not of God. The Protestant church comes from Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Henry VIII of England. Before these men lived there

was no such thing as a Protestant church. These men were not holy. They did not live holy lives. On the contrary they were guilty of many grievous sins. For instance, Luther at one time had solemnly promised to live a chaste life and never to marry. He broke that solemn vow and married, or rather lived unlawfully with a certain woman, an escaped nun, who likewise had solemnly promised God never to marry. Luther spoke and wrote many things so wicked, vulgar and unbecoming, that no respectable person, much less a saint, would even think of saying or writing them. Calvin was a stubborn, cruel man, who insulted, imprisoned, tortured and even murdered men, who contradicted him. Zwingli himself acknowledged that he led a wicked, impure life. King Henry VIII of England was an adulterer; that is, a pereson who lived unlawfully with other women, even though he had been lawfully married in the sight of God and the Church. He was at the same time so cruel that he had his own wives and thousands of priests and subjects executed because they would not acknowledge that he was the head of the Church in England.

d) Is the doctrine of the Protestant churches a holy doctrine? Luther taught that only Faith is necessary to be saved. Consequently no matter what sins a person commits, he can be saved, provided only that he believes, for Faith without good works will save. Are these holy doctrines?—Can such teaching please God? —The people took Luther at his word, and soon things became so bad that Luther himself acknowledged that under the Catholic Church there was much more piety and holiness. Calvin and Zwingli (and Luther also to a certain extent) taught that man has no free will and, therefore, cannot do good. God has destined certain men from all eternity to be saved—and, therefore, they will be saved without a doubt, no matter how they live; other persons have been destined by God from all eternity to be damned—and, therefore, they will most surely be lost forever in Hell, no matter what

pains they take to live good lives. Is not that a wicked, cruel, and detestable teaching?—If these teachings were true, God would not be holy and just, and men would necessarily grow careless and fall into despair. Moreover, Protestants are not nearly so strict as Catholics are in regard to leading a good Christian life. They do not insist so much on prayer and attending divine services. How many of them go to church on Sundays?—They do not fast; they do not go to confession; they think it is right to get a divorce. Indeed the Protestant Reformer, Melanchthon, was right when he said: "It is good to live Protestant, but it is good to die Catholic." No, the Protestant church is not the true Church of Jesus Christ.

3. a) St. Anthony of Padua became such a great saint, because he faithfully obeyed the Holy Roman Catholic Church, when it invited him to lead a holy life. He assisted at Holy Mass regularly; he received the Sacraments frequently and devoutly. He joined a religious society or order, the Order of St. Francis of Assisi, where he solemnly vowed to serve God till his last breath in holy poverty, chastity and obedience, in prayer, mortification and good works towards his neighbor. Gladly did he heed the invitation of Holy Mother Church to strive with all his might to imitate the example of Christ most closely. No wonder, then, that he became such a great saint. The Holy Roman Catholic Church does not only demand of its children that they live holy lives, but it also helps them to become holy. It possesses the Seven Sacraments, the fountains of divine grace. These means of grace the Church has preserved and administered most faithfully from the very beginning of its existence. The Church commands every Catholic, who has attained the use of reason, to receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist worthily at least once a year, namely in the Easter time. But it is the Church's most earnest desire that all Catholics should go to Holy Communion as frequently as possible, every day if they are

able. Moreover, we Catholics have another rich source of divine grace and holiness—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. And the Church commands under pain of mortal sin, that all Catholics, who have the use of reason, should assist worthily at Holy Mass every Sunday and Holyday of obligation throughout the entire year. Just think, too, of the many, many religious congregations or orders, in which men and women serve the Lord Jesus most faithfully by a life of poverty, chastity and obedience, of prayer, fasting, mortification and works of charity for the greater honor and glory of God and for the good of their fellow men. Just recall the countless devotions, that Holy Mother Church invites her children to practise—the veneration of the saints and their relics, the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, the Forty Hours of Adoration, the Scapular, the pious pilgrimages, etc., etc. Why all these things? —Simply and solely that we may become saints in Heaven. That is another reason why the Catholic Church is Holy. **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is Holy because it invites all to a holy life.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Have the Protestants these means of grace?—No, they have only one true Sacrament—Baptism. They have no true Penance, no true Holy Eucharist and none of the other Sacraments. They have no Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, for they have no true priests. They have no religious orders or congregations, no veneration of the saints and their relics, none of those beautiful devotions, that are so dear to Catholics and have produced so many Saints. Whatever good and pious helps to holiness they possess, they have borrowed from the Catholic Church.

4. a) A tree is best known by the fruits which it produces. The true Church of Christ can best be known by the saints it has brought forth. Just think of the beautiful life of St. Anthony of Padua. Just recall the many miracles which God Himself performed through this great saint, to show to all the world how

pleased He was with the holy life of St. Anthony. Name some of these miracles.—Yes, in the Holy Roman Catholic Church there are saints, as numerous as the stars in the heavens, not ordinary holy men and women, but great saints, who are real heroes of virtue and holiness. From the very beginning the Church has produced great saints, and never has it ceased to produce great saints even up to our own times. To whom do those thousands of holy Martyrs belong, who in the early centuries shed their life's blood for Jesus, and by their holy life, their shining miracles, converted the heathens?—They all belonged to the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Who were those great Teachers, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, countless others, who by their learning no less than by their holy life and miracles glorified the Faith of Christ?—They were members of the Church to which you and I belong. Who is it that brought forth those holy missionaries, who like St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius, St. Boniface, St. Patrick, etc., left all and went into heathen countries, where amidst privations and sufferings of all sorts and in the face of death itself converted thousands of pagans to the true Faith?—It is again the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Who is it that led so many thousands of young men and women to forsake the world with all its honors and pleasures and riches, in order to live like angels in prayer, self-denial, good works, in order to sacrifice their health and their life in the care of the sick in the hospitals, on the battlefields, in the pesthouses among the lepers?—It is the Church to which you and I belong. In the nineteenth century many thousands of Catholics have been martyred for the Faith in foreign lands. Of these one hundred and fourteen have already been declared blessed (beatified) by the Church. One hundred and eleven men and sixty-three women have led such lives of heroic virtue and holiness, that the Church is preparing to declare them blessed. *(Show the pupils the volume:* "The Holiness of the Church in the Nine-

teenth Century" by Rev. C. Kempf, S. J., translated by Rev. Francis Breymann, S. J., publ. by Benzinger Bros., N. Y.) You know that the Church honors only those men and women as saints, prays to them and places their pictures or statues on the altars, whom God Himself shows to be saints, models of holiness, by the heroic virtues they practised and the miracles they performed. Of course besides these there are innumerable others, who are also holy, that is, who are now in Heaven. But they are not honored and invoked as saints. Dear children, "only one who is holy can educate men to be saints!" Our Church is truly the Mother of Saints. **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is Holy, because of the eminent holiness of so many thousands of its children.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Where are the Protestant saints?—I have never heard that God glorified a single Protestant by a miracle. Of course, there are also among the Protestants many good and pious people. But a pious Christian is far from being a saint. For a saint must be a hero in holiness and must show miracles. Protestants have not such saints. Therefore they have to choose Patron Saints for their children from among Catholic Saints.

Dear children, now judge for yourselves: Can the Protestant church be the true Church of Christ?—The Holy Roman Catholic Church alone has the mark of holiness or sanctity and is, therefore, the true Church of Christ. Over this Church stands the second of those four stars, that call out to all the world: "This is the House of God!"

Write on the blackboard:

The Holy Roman Catholic Church is:
One—in faith, in communion, in government.
Holy—in its Founder, in its doctrines, in the means of holiness, in thousands of saints.
Therefore it alone is the true Church of Christ.

Synthesis. Today we have found a truth that fills our hearts with joy. The true Church of Christ has four marks. Which Church has the mark of unity? Why is the Holy Roman Catholic Church one? Why is it holy? Can we say the same of the Protestant churches? Why not? Which then is the true Church of Christ? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. We are members of the true Church of Christ. That is a great blessing. A certain convert to the true Church once said so beautifully: "My heart rejoices often just like a little child over the Christmas tree, when I think of the wonderful mercy of God, and I do not know how to conduct myself, because I possess the precious treasure of holy Faith. How good, how very good God has been to me, to call me into His one and holy Church."

2. But there are so many Catholics, alas, who do not know at all how fortunate they are to be children of the true Church. Yes, there are Judas souls, who are willing to sell this great blessing for a little money or pleasure or honor. Oh! what shameful ingratitude. You have been called into the true Church in the very first days of your earthly life. Thank God a thousand times for this inestimable favor. "O God! I thank Thee that I am a Catholic."

LESSON XXXIV.

(II) The True Church of Christ.

Catechetical Unit:

1) In which Church are these marks found? L. XII, Q. 133 (second half).

2) By whom is the Church made and kept one, holy, catholic and apostolic? L. XII, Q. 135.

Preparation. Dear children, the Church of Christ is "like a city seated on a hill" (Matt. v, 14.) It can be

seen far and wide and can be known by all the world as the Church of Christ, for its Divine Founder put certain marks upon it. What are the marks of the Church? Which Church has the marks of unity and holiness? *(Review the preceding lesson briefly.)*—The Holy Roman Catholic Church has also the other two marks of Catholicity and Apostolicity.

Aim. Today I shall show you that this is so. Our Church is Catholic and Apostolic; therefore it is the true Church of Christ.

I. The Catholicity of the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

Presentation and Explanation. 1. a) Just before our Blessed Saviour ascended into Heaven, He said to His Apostles: "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi, 15.) On Pentecost the Apostles began to fulfil this command of Christ and ever since that time their lawful successors, the Popes and Bishops of the Catholic Church, have continued to carry out this great mission according to the will of Christ. The true Church, therefore, must exist in all ages. Now does the Holy Roman Catholic Church come from Christ Himself and has it been in the world ever since the days of Christ?
(Ask the children to look carefully at the Graphic Representation of the Leading Christian Denominations printed on the chart at the end of the book.) Dear children, you will notice that the Holy Roman Catholic Church began in the time of Christ and has continued without a single break all down the ages even to our own days. Our Church, therefore, is truly catholic or universal, for it is found in all ages. It is catholic or universal in time. All the worldly kingdoms, which have come into existence in the days of Christ, have long since ceased to be; only the kingdom of Christ continues on without interruption throughout the past nineteen hundred years. **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is Catholic or Universal, because it subsists in all**

ages. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

b) What about the other churches that claim to be the true Church of Christ?—*(Use the Chart.)* Certain heretics, for instance the Gnostics, the Montanists, the Novatians, the Manicheans, the Donatists, the Arians, the Macedonians, the Pelagians, the Semi-Pelagians, the Monothelites, came into existence many years after Christ, and after a short time they ceased to be. Other heretics, for example, the Nestorians and the Monophysites, continue down to our own times. But as you see, they began only in the fifth century after Christ. Therefore they cannot be the true Church of Christ, for they do not subsist in all ages. The Greek Church also continues down to our own times, but it cannot be the true Church of Christ because it began only in the eleventh century (1054) by separating from the Holy Roman Catholic Church, which was founded by Christ on St. Peter. It is true that the Greek Church united again for a time with the Roman Church towards the end of the thirteenth century, but it separated again in the fifteenth century, and since then has remained in schism. In the year 1589 the Russian Orthodox Church separated from the Greek Church. It, too, has continued to our times, but like the Greek Church it cannot show that it subsists in all ages. Other heretics, for example the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Hussites, the Bohemian Brethren, began only many hundreds of years after Christ. Consequently they cannot be the true Church of Christ. Finally the Protestant churches began only in the sixteenth century after Christ. Thus the Lutheran, the Zwinglian, the Anglican or the Episcopalian, the Calvinist, the Presbyterian, the Congregationalist, the Baptist churches are at most only four hundred years old. The same is true of the Quakers, or the Society of Friends as they are also called. The Methodist church was founded only after the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Other churches, for instance the Salvation Army and the Christian Scientist

church are not even seventy-five years old. You see, therefore, that none of these churches can be the true Church of Christ.

2. a) Our Church is spread over the whole earth, and is everywhere one and the self-same Church. In the beginning it was like a tiny mustard seed, but it grew into a mighty, giant tree, whose branches are spread throughout all lands and among all nations. And this Church continues to grow mightily year after year.

(Show the pupis a globe or a large map of the world.) Dear children, look at this globe (or map) and I shall show you how the Holy Roman Catholic Church began to spread over the world, so that today it embraces people of every nation and country and language under the sun. *(The catechist might point out on the globe or the map each country or place mentioned).*

The Apostles labored for many years first among the Jews of *Palestine.* Then they separated and divided the earth among them. Some went into the countries nearby, while others traveled into far-off lands. St. Peter came to *Rome,* where he established the Church and finally received the crown of martyrdom. St. Paul made three great missionary journeys into *Asia Minor;* he preached the Gospel in *Greece* and *Rome,* and perhaps also in *Spain. France,* or Gaul as it used to be called, had many Christians during the life time of the Apostles. Catholic missionaries soon visited the left bank of the *Rhine river,* and passed along the *Danube river. Northern Africa* and *Egypt* became Catholic through the labors of missionaries sent out from Rome. Thus during the first four centuries a very great part of the world was already converted to the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

In the fifth and sixth centuries great hordes of barbarian nations swept over the face of Europe and threatened to destroy the Catholic Church. But Catholic missionaries converted them one by one. *Ireland,* where St. Patrick labored as a missionary, began to be converted to the Catholic Church in the fourth century.

Scotland was converted in the fifth century through the efforts of St. Columba. *England* was converted to the Catholic Church by St. Augustine, who was sent there by Pope St. Gregory the Great.

From the seventh to the tenth century the Catholic Church spread into *Arabia, Armenia, Caucasia,* and even into *India* and *China. Abyssinia* also accepted the Catholic Faith at an early date.

In the sixth century Catholic missionaries converted parts of *Germany;* but the great Apostle of the Germans is St. Boniface, who was martyred for the Faith in the year 755.

From the seventh to the tenth century the Catholic Church made its way among the Slavic peoples in *Bohemia, Poland* and *Moravia.* From the ninth to the eleventh century the *Scandinavian Kingdoms* were converted to the true Church of Christ by Catholic missionaries, who went even into *Iceland* and *Greenland.* In the tenth and eleventh centuries the *Serbian* and *Russian peoples* became members of the Catholic Church. King St. Stephen introduced the Catholic Faith into *Hungary.* You see again how far and wide the Catholic Church had spread in the countries of Europe up to the fourteenth century through the heroic efforts of the Catholic Church.

In the fifteenth century great discoveries were made in the New World. Catholic missionaries from Portugal established the Catholic Faith in *Africa* and the *Congo.* The Church gained a foothold also on the *eastern coast of Africa,* in *Madagascar* and the nearby islands. There were Catholics also in *Cape Colony.*

The Spaniards, too, had crossed the ocean. Catholic missionaries accompanied Christopher Columbus on his second trip to *America.* But the cruel conduct of the Spanish conquerors towards the Indians prevented the Catholic Church from making many converts. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Catholic missionaries converted the natives of *South* and *Central America.* At the beginning of the sixteenth century

the *Southern States of North America* became to a large extent converted to the Holy Roman Catholic Church. *The Northern States of North America* were converted to the Catholic Faith in the seventeenth century by missionaries from France. The *States along the Atlantic Ocean* became Catholic in the seventeenth century by the labors of missionaries from England.

The Portuguese went around the Cape of Good Hope into *East India.* Catholic missionaries followed them. Hence the Catholic Church became established in *Upper India* and the nearby islands, in *Lower India,* in *Japan* and in *China.* The great Jesuit missionary, St. Francis Xavier, after great miracles and many labors ended his life alone on the shores of the Island of Sanzian in the year 1552. Other religious orders, for instance the Benedictines, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, etc., spread the Church among the heathens. The Jesuits especially labored zealously to convert the heathen peoples of India, Japan, Thibet, Aethiopia, South and Central America.

Great persecutions broke out against the Catholic Church particularly in Japan, China and the countries of the distant East. The Catholic Church has been flourishing in *Australia* since the year 1820. Catholic missionaries established the Faith also in *Oceania* in the year 1830.

You see, therefore, that the Holy Roman Catholic Church began in the days of Christ and the Apostles, and has converted the peoples of practically every country and language under the sun. Surely the Holy Ghost must be with this Church continually inspiring its missionaries to convert the nations and helping them to endure all sorts of persecutions and labors for the sake of Christ and His doctrines. Yes, **the Holy Roman Catholic Church is Catholic or Universal, because it teaches all nations.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Dear children, this Church still continues to spread over the face of the earth. According to the census

of 1906-1908 there were over 188,000,000 Catholics in Europe; over 12,000,000 in Asia; over 1,000,000 in Australia and Oceania; over 2,000,000 in Africa and more than 87,000,000 in America. In all there were more than 293,000,000 Catholics in the world.

In the United States of America according to the census of the year 1917 there were more than 17,000,000 Catholics. The total increase for the past ten years is over three and one-half millions of Catholics for this country alone. At present there are over 20,000 priests, 93 Bishops and 13 archbishops taking care of the flock of Christ in our great country. Yes, the Holy Roman Catholic Church is indeed Catholic or Universal, because it teaches all nations under the sun.

b) Is the Protestant church catholic or universal?—It is true that there are Protestants in nearly every country of the world. But are they *one* and the same church?—No, they are not one and the same church, but rather hundreds of different sects. The Protestant church of Germany is different from the Protestant church of England, and the Protestant church of England is different from the Protestant church in the United States of America and other countries. No, the Protestant churches are not catholic or universal. They began as national churches. For example the Lutheran church in Germany was the State Church of the German Empire, and the Emperor was its head before the great world war. The Protestant church in England is the State Church of England. Indeed even though the Protestant churches of the whole world were to unite into one church, they would not be one and the same church, but simply a collection of different sects. They would be like a nut shell without the kernel, for they do not believe the same doctrines.

All the Protestants of the world taken together are not equal in number to the members of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. The total number of Christians in the world according to the census of 1906-1908 is over 617,000,000. Now of these the Catholics number over

293,000,000 or about 47 per cent.; the Protestants number about 186,000,000 or about 30 per cent.

It is true, that the Protestant churches are still spreading over the earth. But in the beginning they did not think of taking in the whole world like the Catholic Church did. They were national churches only. It is only for the past 100 years that they have begun to send missionaries to convert the heathens. The Methodists were the first to do this. The Protestant churches spend much money to make converts, but they cannot show the glorious fruits that the Catholic Church can show, as even their own missionaries freely admit. Therefore they look with anger and envy at the flourishing missions of the Catholic Church. To spread Bibles among the pagans—that is their chief work. But that does not make Christians of the heathens.

c) How about the Greek church?—Is it catholic or universal?—It is true, that it calls itself catholic (the orthodox catholic church), but it has no right to that name. For it is found only in a few countries. Moreover, it is not one and the same church everywhere, but it is split into many different sects. It tried indeed to convert the Slavic peoples, but it never tried to convert the heathens. No, the Greek church is not catholic or universal, because it does not teach all nations.

3. a) The Holy Roman Catholic Church has always taught all of Christ's doctrines from the very beginning of its existence. Everywhere its teachings are the same. Its teachings in one country do not differ from its teachings in another country. This must be so, for the Holy Ghost abides with the Church forever, guiding and preserving it from all error and contradiction. All Catholics believe today the very same doctrines that the Apostles and the early Christians believed and practised. The Church's doctrines are the same yesterday, today and forever. **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is Catholic or Universal, because it maintains all truth.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Do the Protestants believe the very same doctrines that Jesus and the Apostles taught?—No, they do not; for Luther denied many teachings that Christ taught. Moreover, what one Protestant church teaches as true today, it denies tomorrow, and what is preached in one country is rejected and denied in another. The Protestant church "is tossed about by every wind of doctrine."

c) The Greek church denies that the Pope is the visible Head of Christ's Church on earth and that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. And yet, Jesus clearly taught both of these truths, as we have already learned.

Therefore neither the Protestant nor the Greek church has the right to be called the true Church of Christ. The Holy Roman Catholic Church has the third mark. Over this Church stands the third heavenly star, that points out to all the world that here is the House of God, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth. Our Church is Catholic or Universal. *(Have the pupils repeat the entire answer together as above).*

II. The Apostolicity of the Roman Catholic Church.

Dear children, the Church to which you and I belong has also the glorious, shining mark of Apostolicity. Let me show you this.

Presentation. On a certain occasion while our Blessed Saviour was on the Lake of Galilee He sat in the boat of *Peter.* Do you know why He did this?—He wished to teach us that He had chosen Peter to be the pilot of a much greater boat, namely His Holy Church, which was to make its way without interruption through the sea of this world to the end of time. After Peter died, his successors, the Popes of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, took charge of the helm or steering wheel,—one after the other,—one received the helm from the hand of the other. St. Peter was followed by Pope Linus, then by Pope Cletus or Anacletus, then by Pope Clement, then by Pope Evaristus, etc. In the preceding century Pope Pius VII was followed by Pope Leo

XII, then by Pope Pius VIII, then by Pope Gregory XVI, then by Pope Pius IX, then by Pope Leo XIII, then by Pope Pius X, then by Pope Benedict XV, who is the two hundred and fifty-ninth successor of St. Peter. History knows the name of each and every Pope; how long each one reigned; what each one did, and of many, very many Popes, history knows what sufferings and persecutions they had to undergo. No matter how many Popes there have been in the Church of Christ, and no matter how many there will yet be—in all of them St. Peter continues to live and act. They all are Peter, who still lives in them through all the centuries. *(Show the pupils a list of the Popes).*

Just as Peter lives on in his successors, the Popes, so too the other *Apostles* continue to live in their successors, the Bishops of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. The Bishops, too, are to rule and guide, not indeed the whole ship like Peter, but only their own parts. They are at the oars of the boat, as it were. And under them are helpers, the simple Priests, who are not Bishops. These, too, Bishops and Priests, follow one another in regular order. The place at the oars is never empty. Just as there is always some one at the helm of Christ's ship, the Church, so too there is always some one at the oars. The Apostles continue to live on through all the ages in the Bishops of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. So it was from the beginning: so it is today: so it will be to the end of time.

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, ours is a wonderful Church. It began with the Apostles and St. Peter, and since their time there have always been Apostles in the Church. If you follow a river upwards, you will finally come to its source or origin. So too, if you follow our Church back through the ages, you will finally come to its source or origin. You will see that it comes from the Apostles; that it takes its origin from the Apostles, whom Christ Himself made to be the first rulers and pastors of His Church. Yes, **the Holy Roman Catholic Church is Apostolic, because it**

was founded by Christ on the Apostles. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Do the Protestant sects also come from the Apostles?—No, they certainly do not. The Lutheran church was founded by Martin Luther; the Calvinist church by Calvin; the Zwinglian church by Zwingli; the Anglican church by Henry VIII, King of England. All these churches were founded by men who lived fifteen hundred years after the death of the Apostles. How then could they come from the Apostles?—That is simply impossible.

2. a) The Popes and the Bishops of our Church are the lawful successors of St. Peter and the other Apostles. They have received their office and their powers from St. Peter and the other Apostles. The office and the authority of the rulers of the Holy Roman Catholic Church can be traced back from Priest to Bishop, and from Bishop to Pope in unbroken line century after century to the time when the Church was founded by Christ and His Apostles. A continuous and unbroken chain or succession of Catholic Pastors and Rulers has existed in our Church from the days of St. Peter and the Apostles. From Pope Benedict XV, who now sits in the Papal Chair at Rome, we can easily follow the line of successors to St. Peter, who first held posssesion of it. The many particular churches in every part of the world united with the See of Peter can trace their Bishops back to Apostolic men, who founded these churches, and it can be shown in turn that these Apostolic men received their office and authority from the Apostles, or from the successors of the Apostles. The Popes and the Bishops of our Church are the lawful successors of St. Peter and the Apostles. In the Pope and the Bishops of our Church St. Peter and the other Apostles continue to live. **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is Apostolic, because it is governed by the lawful successors of the Apostles.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Are the Protestant churches apostolic in this

way?—Where in the Protestant churches is Peter?—Where are the other Apostles?—These churches have neither a Pope nor Bishops; indeed they have not even Priests any longer. Their Pastors and Rulers have not received their office and authority from the Apostles. For when their first pastors and rulers began, the Apostles and Peter had been dead for over fifteen hundred years. Neither did these pastors and rulers of the Protestant churches receive their office and their powers from any successor of the Apostles, for instance from a Pope or a lawful Bishop. For the Pope and the lawful Bishops condemned the teachings of the Protestants and excommunicated their first pastors and rulers. Not one of them was a lawfully consecrated Bishop. Consequently the Protestant pastors and rulers have not received their office and authority in a lawful way. They are not the lawful successors of the Apostles.

3. a) Our Church has received its teachings from the Apostles and it teaches the very same doctrines today that the Apostles themselves taught from the beginning. The whole Catholic Church professes the Faith, which our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV, teaches. And Pope Benedict XV teaches the very same doctrines that his predecessor, Pope Pius X, taught and which the Catholic Church under him believed. And if we continue back through the centuries, we shall come to St. Peter, the first Pope. Never did a Pope teach a doctrine different from what his predecessors received from the Apostles. In the Holy Roman Catholic Church, to which we belong, the same doctrines are being taught now which were taught in every country and age since the days of the Apostles. Not a single truth has been lost, not a single doctrine has been changed. It must be so, for the Holy Ghost is always with the Church of Christ. **The Holy Roman Catholic Church is Apostolic, because it has never ceased, and never will cease, to teach what the Apostles taught.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Can we say this truthfully of the Protestant Churches?—No, indeed. For they have not received their doctrines from the Apostles. They are only four hundred years old. They received their teachings from Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and Henry VIII of England. Moreover, their doctrines continually change. In the Protestant churches one says one thing, another says the very opposite. Protestant teachings in one country differ from Protestant teachings in another country. Can such teachings be called apostolic?—It is just this disunion and lack of harmony that has led many Protestants to enter the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Our Church is indeed Apostolic. *(Have the pupils repeat the entire answer together).*

Dear children, our Church has indeed the fourth mark of the true Church of Jesus Christ. Over it appears the fourth heavenly star shining in glory before all the world. That star joins the other three stars and unites to form a splendid crown to grace the head of the Spouse of Christ, the true Church of Jesus on earth. These four stars tell the world that the Holy Roman Catholic Church is in very truth the House of God, the Kingdom of Christ on earth. The Protestant and the Greek churches have not a single mark to show that they come from Christ, the Divine Architect. Therefore they are not the true Church of Christ. **These marks are found in the Holy Roman Catholic Church alone.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. Our Church is not the work of man; it is the work of God Himself. Those four heavenly marks tell us that in the clearest way. Only God, the Holy Spirit of God, could keep so many millions of men united in the one Faith, united in worship and government. God alone can teach such holy doctrines, help so many millions of weak men to lead such a holy life and bring forth so many heroes of virtue and holiness in every country and age and nation. The Spirit of God alone can preserve the Church in all ages, can help it to preach the Gospel to all nations and to maintain all

truth. The Spirit of God alone can keep the Pastors and Rulers of the Church united in unbroken line with St. Peter and the other Apostles, can preserve the doctrines of the Apostles pure and undefiled in the Church forever. Yes, all this wonderful work is done by the Holy Spirit, Who descended upon the young Church on Pentecost and has abided with that Church to our own time. **The Church is made and kept One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth and holiness, Who unites and sanctifies its members throughout the world.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. The Holy Roman Catholic Church is:
   a) *Catholic*—subsists in all ages—teaches all nations—maintains all truth;
   b) *Apostolic*—founded on the Apostles—governed by their lawful successors—always teaches their doctrines.

   Therefore it alone is the true Church of Christ.
2. The Church is kept One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic by the Holy Spirit.

Synthesis. How many marks has the Church? Which Church has the mark of Catholicity? Why? Has the Protestant church this mark? The Greek church? Which Church has the mark of Apostolicity? Why? Has the Protestant church this mark? Why not? Who keeps the Church one, holy, catholic and apostolic? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. We belong to the true Church of Christ. But there are many millions of people who are not members of Christ's Kingdom on earth. May you, therefore, despise or ridicule the Protestants?—No, that would be unchristian. Whoever loves his Church, as a child loves its mother, will feel sympathy with these erring brethren. And because he has real sympathy he will pray for them. St. James (v, 6) says:

"The continual prayer of a just man availeth much." In England every year thousands of Protestants return to the true Church. The same is true of other countries, especially of our own. Pray, therefore, that the Holy Spirit may let the light of His grace shine before them and show them the true Church, the "one true fold and one Shepherd."

LESSON XXXV.

The Communion of Saints.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the communion of the members of the Church called? L. XXXI, Q. 337.

2) What does the Communion of Saints mean? L. XXXI, Q. 338.

3) What benefits are derived from the Communion of Saints? L. XXXI, Q. 339.

Preparation. Dear children, the Church is the great congregation of Christians on earth. Who belong to the Church?—All Christians belong to the Church who profess the one Faith of Christ, partake of the same Sacraments and are governed by their lawful pastors, under one visible Head, the Pope. Can we know the true Church?—Which Church has the four marks?—*(Review the preceding lesson briefly.)*—Where is the Church?—The Church is spread over the whole earth. Yes, we can say in truth, that the Church reaches up into Heaven and down into Purgatory. That is what the second part of the ninth article of the Apostles' Creed says: "I believe in the Communion of the Saints."

Aim. Today we shall learn: "Who belongs to the Communion of Saints, and what benefits are derived from this Communion."

Presentation. Father and mother and children belong to the family. The father is the head of the fam-

ily; but the children together with the mother are also members of the family. As long as the children are still young, they generally remain with their parents. But when they grow older and bigger, they usually leave their parents and home and go out among strangers. The boys learn some trade or go to college; the girls go to work or hire out as servants. However, even though the children are no longer at home, but are living among strangers, they nevertheless belong to the family. Father and mother often inquire anxiously: "How are our children getting along?" The children, too, love their parents dearly and never tire of thinking of their dear ones at home. They are glad when they hear good news from their parents and brothers and sisters.

If one of the family gets sick, all the rest of the family mourn over this misfortune, and if possible, they pay a visit to the sick one. If one of the family gets into trouble of one kind or another, the rest of the family help that unfortunate one as much as possible. At times the parents give the children a surprise and the children do the same thing to their parents. They send one another presents at Christmas time, or when the birthday or the namesday of one or the other comes around. They pray also for one another: the parents for the children, and the children for their parents, so that all may prosper and receive the blessing of the good Lord. In brief, all share joys and sorrows with one another. That is the way it ought to be, for they all belong together. Even though they are not living together, they nevertheless form *one* family, and are always united in mind and heart with one another. And even though one of the family dies, that person still belongs to the family. Father and mother continue to say: "Our Joseph, our Mary, are dead. O God! grant them eternal rest!" Thus it is in the family.

Explanation. 1. Dear children, just as it is in a little family, so too, it is in the great Christian family, the

Church of Christ. The father or the head of the Church is Jesus Christ. But he is only the invisible Head—the visible Head is the Pope. That great crowd numbering nearly three hundred millions are children of the great Christian family. They all belong together as members of Christ's Church. Of course, they are widely separated from one another in all countries of the world, but in heart and mind they are closely united with one another in one great family.

If one of the members of the family dies, that person still continues to be reckoned a member of the family. And rightly so. The other members of the family do not forget that member and continue to love him. It is just the same in the Church of Christ. Many millions of members have already died in the great Christian family, Christ's Church. Death takes away every day at least twenty thousand children, great and small, from Christ's Church. Some of them die as saints, entirely free from every sin and all the punishments due to sin. They go at once into the eternal home and become saints in Heaven. But they do not therefore cease to belong to us; and over there beyond the grave they continue to wish to remain our brothers and sisters. But many other members of the Church die—it is indeed terrible to think of it—in mortal sins. They are dead members of the Church of Christ even on earth, and over there beyond the grave they are lost and disinherited children; for they are rejected from God's presence. Therefore they are cast out forever from our family circle; they are no longer of us; they belong to the devil and to Hell. But most of the members of the Christian family, the Church, are not yet ripe of Heaven; neither are they fit for Hell. They are condemned to Purgatory. There they must be purified more and more and made ripe for Heaven, just as in the summer time the fruits of the trees become ripe and fit to be used.

Dear children, do you see?—All these together form *one* great, holy family: the Christians on earth, the

saints in Heaven, and the poor Souls in Purgatory. We on earth make up what is called the *Church Militant,* because we must still fight daily for Heaven. The saints in Heaven are called the *Church Triumphant,* because they already celebrate the feast of victory or triumph in Heaven and may rejoice forever in Heaven. The Poor Souls in Purgatory are the *Church Suffering,* because they must still endure suffering, in order to obtain Heaven. But these are not three different churches. On the contrary, all of them together from but *one* Church, one great communion, which embraces earth, Heaven and Purgatory. **The communion of the members of the Church is called the Communion of Saints.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. Who then belong to the Communion of the Saints? —What does the Communion of Saints mean?—St. Paul once said: "As in one body we have many members, so we being many, are one body" (Rom. xii, 4, 5); "and the head of that body is Christ" (Col. i, 8.) That is indeed a beautiful comparison. There are many members in our body, great and small; but all are united with one another and form only *one* body. The most noble part of the body is the head. So too, Christ is the Head, but we are the members in this great body, the Church. Our Catechism says: **The Communion of Saints means the union which exists between the members of the Church on earth with one another, and with the blessed in Heaven and with the suffering souls in Purgatory.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. But perhaps some of you are saying to yourselves: "Why is this great family called the Communion of Saints? I surely am no saint!" Yes, I believe you. You are not a saint fit for Heaven. But there was a time when you were perfectly holy. If you had died then you would long ago have been a saint in Heaven, and would no longer be homesick for this world. When were you so fortunate?—By Baptism we have all been sanctified or made saints. The Holy Ghost did that.

We ought always to remain as holy as we were on that occasion. Therefore the priest gave us a white garment after we were baptized and said the words: "Receive this white garment, which mayest thou bring without spot before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, and mayest have life everlasting!" Yes, that is what God demands of us, that we become holy during our life on earth. We are all called to be saints; for in Heaven there are only saints.

But you need not have any anxiety, for you can become holy by the grace of God, if you really wish to be holy. St. Augustine, too, for a long time was fearful at the thought of becoming a saint; but then he said to himself: "Others have become saints, why should not I be able likewise to become holy?"—And he really did become a very great saint. Many thousands of our brothers and sisters have already happily finished the task of becoming saints, and are now in Heaven. They beckon to us from their heavenly thrones and call out to us: "You, too, must become a saint!" That is indeed a great honor one day to say to the holy Apostles and martyrs: "Dear brothers, dear sisters!" And to the Mother of God: "Dear Mother!" Remember, therefore, that the members of this great family are called "saints," because all are called to become saints; all are made holy by Baptism; many are already saints in Heaven.

4. The members of a good family hold fast to one another and help one another. When one of the family becomes rich, he gives freely and generously out of the abundance of his possessions to the needy ones of the family. If one of the members obtains a position of honor and influence, he speaks a good word for the rest of the family. You see, therefore, that great benefits are derived from the close union existing among the members of a good family. So too, it is in regard to the Communion of Saints.

a) In a good family all the members work and earn money for one another. The same is true of our great

family, the Communion of Saints. We Christians on earth work together and for one another. When you say the Our Father, you pray: "Our Father!—forgive us our trespasses!—deliver us from evil!" Every Our Father belongs, therefore, not to you alone, but is for all Christians. When the priest reads Mass, he prays not for himself only, but for us all. Every Holy Mass is like the sun: from each Mass a ray of divine grace falls into your heart. And when a missionary goes among the heathens and under great labor and trials preaches the Gospel, and perhaps has to die a martyr's death, he surely earned Heaven for himself. But he has earned something also for each one of us; not one of us remains emptyhanded. Or when a Sister of Mercy nurses the sick and dies of that sickness, she has earned a great merit for herself. But we all share in that good work of this Sister. Therefore what one Christian on earth does, benefits all—is a holy possession of the family.

But that is not all. We possess another treasury in the Church. In this treasury there is an immense treasure, to be sure, not of gold or precious stones, for these are as nothing in the sight of God. In this treasury there are countless merits and good works. From whom do they all come?—In this treasure house of the Church there is to be found everything that Jesus did for us; and that is much and infinitely precious. In this treasury are also the merits of the Mother of God and of the saints. Whatever good they did, that too, belongs to us; for they are our brothers and sisters and belong to our holy family. That is indeed a great good fortune, to be a child of the Catholic Church. In this Church the poorest child can be rich, yes, far richer than a king, if only that child is a child of God by grace. But the sinner, too, is not left empty handed. He receives grace, at least that he might feel sorry for his sins and begin a new life. Thus it is in the Communion of Saints. **The following benefits are derived from the Communion of Saints:—the faithful on earth assist one**

another by their prayers and good works. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Many of our brothers and sisters in the great family of the Communion of Saints have become wealthy and powerful, not indeed in the goods of this world, but in the treasures of Heaven. Some of their merits they have already used to pay off their debts of temporal punishments; for every man has debts in the sight of God. But much is left over from their merits and good works. Is that to be lost?—No, indeed; we receive that, we—their brothers and sisters. For with us everything remains in the family and the relationship. These fortunate members of our family have received the highest honors; they are friends of God in Heaven. Therefore they have much influence and power with God. Now they pray for us, and their prayers or intercessions are worth their weight in gold. For while they were on earth, they pleased God: in Heaven God pleases them in turn. You see, therefore, that our communion with the saints in Heaven brings us much good, many benefits. **The faithful on earth are aided by the intercession of the Saints in Heaven.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Sometimes in a family a brother or a sister gets into trouble and hard luck or becomes sick and cannot help himself or herself any longer. Then all the rest of the family have sympathy for the poor unfortunate one and say: "We must help; it is our brother or sister!"

In our great family of saints there is much misery and need. Thousands are obliged to suffer in God's prison—Purgatory. These are the Poor Souls. Piteously they cry out to us and say: "Have mercy on us; have mercy on us!" We would have to possess a heart of stone if we were unwilling to help them. But how can we help them?—When we pray or give alms or fast or do any other good work, we lay up merit for ourselves. But we can also give this merit to the Poor Souls in Purgatory. Then God accepts it as though these Poor Souls did these good works themselves. We

can help our suffering brethren, especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Did you ever see the picture on which is represented a priest at the Altar at the moment of the Consecration? Near the Altar is a scene from Purgatory. From the chalice a few drops of the Precious Blood of Jesus fall into the flames of Purgatory. Then an angel comes and frees some Poor Soul from the flames and takes it into Heaven. *(Show a large picture of this scene.)* What the saints in Heaven do for us, that we can do for the Poor Souls in Purgatory. They pray for our help and we help them by our prayers and good works. That is another benefit that is derived from the Communion of Saints. **Both the Saints in Heaven and the faithful on earth help the souls in Purgatory.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard. Have the pupils repeat the entire answer together).*

Write on the blackboard:

Communion of Saints
1. the faithful on earth;
2. the saints in Heaven;
3. the souls in Purgatory.

Benefits coming from the Communion of Saints:

1. the faithful on earth help one another;
2. the saints in Heaven help the faithful on earth;
3. the saints in Heaven and the faithful on earth help the souls in Purgatory.

Synthesis. Today we have heard what almost makes us a little proud. We belong to a great and holy family—the Communion of Saints. This Communion is a holy union that embraces earth, Heaven and Purgatory. Who belongs to the Communion of Saints? Who is excluded from the Communion of Saints? Rightly, therefore, do we call this threefold family of Christians the triumphant, the suffering and the militant Church. What do these names mean? Why are the children of this holy family called "Saints?" What benefits are de-

rived from the Communion of Saints in Heaven? What does the Communion of Saints bring to the Souls in Purgatory? to the faithful on earth? We belong now to the militant Church, but we hope one day to belong to the triumphant Church in Heaven. For that is the ordinary way: from earth through Purgatory to Heaven. *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. You ought to be glad to think of the saints in Heaven. They are our brothers and sisters. Pray to them every day. But tell me: May you pray to the saints and honor them?—What does God say about that?—If you look up to the heavens on a clear night, you can see countless stars, great and small, looking down upon you. They sparkle and shine as though they were all brightly shining eyes of God Himself. That is the starry firmament. And that is how I imagine the Heaven of the saints to be. All the saints, great and small, may now shine in the splendor of holiness like eternal lights before the throne of God. Thus does God honor the saints. Now what God does, you, too, may do. What does the Church teach about the honor to be paid to the saints?—Which of the saints ought we to honor in a special manner?—What is the difference between the honor we offer to God and the honor we pay to the saints?—Perhaps some of you will say: "What good is my prayer to the saints? They do not know anything about my prayer."—Do you really think so? —The saints, of course, are not all knowing like God, but they look at the face of God forever. In God they see everything that we do and pray for. St. Theresa once said: "The saints see in God whatever happens on earth just as though it occurred before a mirror." Therefore let us pray zealously to the saints! They will hear us and God will grant the prayers they offer for you.

2. But think also of the Poor Souls! They, too, are our brothers and sisters. Pray for them! Perhaps many a Poor Soul must suffer longer because of your

fault. Put out the fire of the flames of Purgatory. How can you do that?—Why do we have a Mass of Requiem said for the Poor Souls?—The Church celebrates each year a special day, All Soul's Day, for the Poor Souls. The Church is like a good Mother, who cares for her children even beyond the grave and cannot forget them! One day they, too, will become wealthy and powerful. Where?—Some day we, too, shall become Poor Souls. Will they then forget us, their benefactors?—No, they are not so ungrateful.

3. We ought to pray for one another also. For we, too, are brothers and sisters. To whom do you owe prayers especially?—Prayer is the best "Thank you" that you can offer to your dear parents, teachers and benefactors. Often one hears these words: "It is all useless!" But you just wait patiently and persevere in your prayers. St. Stephen prayed for his enemies even while he was dying. And behold! out of Saul was made Paul, out of a deadly enemy of Jesus Christ was formed an Apostle of the Lord. St. Monica prayed sixteen years for her disobedient and sinful son, Augustine. And behold! from a great sinner was made a great penitent and a saint. "Pray for one another, that you may be saved," says St. James (v, 16).

LESSON XXXVI.

The Resurrection of the Body.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Will our bodies share in the reward or punishment of our soul? L. XXXVII, Q. 417.

2) In what state will the bodies of the just arise? L. XXXVII, Q. 418.

3) Will the damned also arise? L. XXXVII, Q. 419.

Preparation. Dear children, Christ's Church is like a great family. It embraces earth, Heaven and Purgatory. Let us review this beautiful doctrine on the

Communion of the Saints. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.)*—You have comfortable beds at home, where you sleep at night. Who calls you in the morning?—Why do you sleep?—You must refresh your tired bodies, so that you may be able to begin a new day in the service of the Lord. Some day, however, you will fall into a sleep from which your mother will not be able to awaken you. You will die. Your soul will leave your body. After death they will lay you away into the cold, hard bed of the grave. And there you will sleep a long, long time. Christ, too, died, just as you will die some day. His Body was placed into the grave. In the same way you, too, will be laid in the grave. But Christ's Body did not remain in the grave always. What happened on the third day?—Our bodies will corrupt in the grave. But for us, too, there will be a resurrection day. We profess our Faith in that truth by reciting the eleventh article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the resurrection of the body." Will we arise like Christ gloriously and transformed?—God alone knows that. When will the resurrection take place?—What signs will precede the last day and the General Judgment?—What will the Lord judge us about?—What will the sentence be?—Why will the General Judgment take place?

Aim. Today we are going to consider the resurrection of the dead. This is a very serious, but at the same time, a very consoling doctrine.

Presentation. Just imagine that the day of Judgment has already come. Christ appears in the clouds of Heaven with great power and majesty. He sends forth His angels into the four quarters of the heavens. Mightily like the sound of a trumpet the call of the angels reechoes in the graves: "Arise, ye dead, for the judgment! It is the resurrection of the body!" Suddenly all the graves show signs of life. The dead come forth, the good and the bad: the former beautiful and resplendent like the sun, the latter ugly like the devil.

Here is a simple grave; only a poor cross marks it.

A poor child lies buried there. It had not many good hours in life; for it was always sick and ailing. On Pentecost this child was allowed to receive its First Holy Communion. Overflowing with happiness that child said to the Saviour: "Good Jesus! I would like to die now, because Thou art with me." The good God fulfilled the desire of this child. Soon afterwards the child grew worse and died. When breathing its last the child prayed so beautifully: "Dear God in Heaven, if it is Thy will, I will gladly die." Now that child appears! It comes forth from the grave. How lovely it looks! Yes, as beautiful and glorious as the Saviour on Easter morning. Its entire body shines and sparkles like the sun, when it rises in the early morning. And now the Angel Guardian approaches and gets the child and takes it to the judgment-seat of the Saviour.

Nearby we see another grave. In it lies a rich and distinguished man. It cannot be long since he died, for the grave is still fresh and many beautiful and costly wreaths lie upon it. Many people attended his funeral. His friends erected a heavy and costly gravestone to his honor, and wrote with letters of gold his praises on that monument. But it is all false. That man was a great sinner. In life he never troubled himself about God nor about his own immortal soul. Now he, too, hears the trumpet call of the angels. The tombstone falls over and is broken to pieces. The earth rises up and that man comes forth from the grave. Oh! how ugly and detestible he appears. His whole body is covered with filthy stains. They are his shameful sins, and they are burned into his very body with the flames of Hell-fire. The unfortunate man sees the other men also risen from the grave. He feels so ashamed that he almost dies again. He would like to run away and return into the grave again. For he would prefer to be with the worms rather than with men. But already the angels are approaching, and they refuse to allow him to return into the tomb. They lead him to the judgment-seat of God. The poor sinner trembles from

head to foot. In despair he cries out: "Ye mountains, fall upon me! Ye hills and rocks, hide me from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne" (Apoc. vi, 16.) But all is in vain. He must go before the tribunal of Christ and hear the sentence of condemnation from the mouth of the Judge: "Depart from Me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire!"

Explanation. 1. a) That is a wonderful and stirring scene, that will take place on the last day—the resurrection of the body! All of us some day will see it happen. Of course, we must first die. Then our body will be placed in the grave. What will happen to the body? —In a short time it will fall to pieces and become dust, out of which it is made. That is indeed enough to make us sad and downhearted, when we think of it. But that little First Communicant did not become sad, but rejoiced at the thought of death. Why could that child be glad?—It thought to itself: "This wicked body tortured me long enough with its many sicknesses. When it lies in the grave, it will no longer cause me any trouble. The hour will come sooner or later, when my body will rise again beautiful and immortal from the grave!" Yes, the body will rise again beautiful and immortal from the grave. That is a great consolation for us, when the thought of death makes us sad: this body will not remain in the grave forever. All of us will hear the call of the angels. Then the soul will return into the body and we shall arise from the grave to new life. Our Catechism says: **Through the resurrection our bodies will again be united to our souls.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

But perhaps you will say: "How can this happen?" —That is an easy matter for Christ. By a single word of His mighty power He can awaken our bodies from the sleep of death. How did God create the first man? —How did Christ raise Lazarus from the dead?—Did not Christ Himself arise gloriously and with glorified body from the dead?—"Nothing is impossible for God."

Therefore we shall arise again from the dead; that is certain. Christ has said so. "The hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John v, 28, 29.) The patient Job believed that firmly and that gave him comfort in his sufferings. "In the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again in my skin and in my flesh. I shall see my God" (xix, 26.) Why even in Nature round about us we often see a wonderful resurrection from death to life. The little seed is laid in the earth. What happens?—There it dies and corrupts. But soon a new, young life sprouts forth: a bud begins to grow and becomes a blade and produces fruit. Or have you ever watched a caterpillar?—When autumn approaches and it begins to get cold, things become unbearable for the caterpillar. It can no longer find food; neither can it endure the cold any longer. If it had understanding like man, it would begin to worry and complain: "What shall I eat? What shall I wear?" But a little animal does not worry, but rather lets the good God take care of it and watch over it. That is after all the most sensible thing to do. It stops eating. It becomes sick and tired unto death and most miserable. After passing a few days in that wretched condition, as though it wanted to examine its conscience and make its last will and testament, the caterpillar crawls away to one side and spins its own casket or coffin. Yes, many a caterpillar even digs a grave for itself under the earth. There it lies down and strips off its everyday dress, and now it looks like a wrapt up corpse. Thus it remains all winter. It does not eat, nor drink, nor feel the cold, nor sweat, nor work, nor walk: in short, it lies there like dead. But scarcely have the first warm rays of the spring sunshine come, and the little herbs and plants sprouted from the earth, when the caterpillar comes again to life in its little coffin and crawls out—

no longer a caterpillar, but a beautiful, many colored butterfly. Now it no longer crawls on the ground, but unfolds its wings in the sunlight and flits from flower to flower and gathers and feeds on the sweet nectar of the flowers. Do you see?—The caterpillar sleeps its winter sleep in its grave. But just as soon as the springtime awakens it, it, too, comes forth to new life and celebrates a resurrection. Our bodies sleep the sleep of death in the grave. But when the eternal springtime comes on the last day, our bodies will awaken to new life and celebrate their resurrection. "I believe in the resurrection of the body!"

b) But perhaps some of you are saying to yourselves: "Yes, is it not enough that the soul goes to Heaven or to Hell? Why should the body also go with it?"—Just listen attentively; the answer is not difficult. Because the body and the soul belong together: the body is the dwelling place of the soul. But there is another reason. Remember all those hard and bitter days, which the little First Communicant had to endure while on earth. Oftentimes this little child's whole body ached and pained; but it suffered everything patiently for the love of God. Because of the many sufferings endured and the good done upon earth the body, too, is to have a share in the joys of Heaven. But the rich and distinguished man in our story had his pleasant days on earth. He ate and drank and had a good time, and often gave his body over to sin. For the pleasure of sin the body, too, must one day share in the punishments which the soul must endure in Hell. God is just. The body, too, is one day to receive eternal reward for the good or eternal punishment for the evil it has done; for it was the instrument for good or for evil. Therefore there is a resurrection of the body. The Catechism says: **Our bodies will share in the reward or punishment of our souls.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. But the day of resurrection will not be a day of joy, a happy Easterday for all; on the contrary, for

many it will be a day of terror and fright. Would you perhaps like to rise like that rich man I spoke to you about in the story?—No, you say; you would prefer that there were no resurrection at all. You are right. You all want to rise like our Saviour on Easter morning, just as our First Communicant did. You remember how the Body of the Saviour looked after His Resurrection.—It was immortal and could not suffer any more; it was resplendently lovely like the sun; it was quick as thought and as lightning; it was like a spirit, so that nothing could hold it back. So too, the body of our little First Communicant will one day be. So too, the bodies of all good people will become. They will be immortal, shining as the morning sun, and all sufferings will be past and done forever. "The just shall shine as the sun" (Matt. xiii, 43), says Christ. Their bodies will be as swift as thought, which in a moment flies from earth to Heaven. "Wherever the soul wishes to go, there the body will be immediately," says St. Augustine; "fine and spiritual will those bodies be, so that no wall or door will be able to retain them any longer, and they will not need food or drink any longer." "The body is sown in corruption," St. Paul says, "it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it will rise in power. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body" (I Cor. xv, 42s.) **The bodies of the just will rise glorious and immortal.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. How will the body of that bad man look?—So ugly that you cannot imagine it at all. Did you ever see a decaying corpse?—That is a terrible sight to behold. But even more detestible and ugly will the body of that sinner and of all sinners appear on the day of the resurrection. Then the wicked would be glad, if they could only die. But there is no death any longer. Those bodies must live forever to be punished in the awful tortures of Hell. **The bodies of the damned will rise also,**

but they will be condemned to eternal punishment. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

St. Paul says expressly: "We shall all indeed rise again: but we shall not all be changed" (I Cor. xv, 51.) The body will one day look just as the soul did when it left the body at death. The more beautiful the soul was in life, the more beautiful will the body be at the resurrection; and the more ugly the soul has made itself by sin, the more detestible will the body appear on that day.

Write on the blackboard:

Resurrection—soul united to body;
bodies share in the reward or punishment of the soul.
Resurrection—the just—glorious and immortal.
the wicked—eternal punishment.

Synthesis. This is a serious, but also a consoling truth—the resurrection of the body. The hour of death will come for every man. Then the body will return to the earth. How long will the body remain in the grave? What do we call this resurrection of the bodies to eternal life? With what words does Christ teach the resurrection of the bodies? Will all men rise from the grave? Why will the bodies rise from the grave? What qualities will the glorified bodies have? What will the bodies of the wicked suffer? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. There is a resurrection of the body. Many do not want to believe that and would like to destroy that faith in the hearts of others. Therefore they have their bodies burned (cremated) instead of buried. This is unchristian and is forbidden by the laws of the Church. Many people imagine that then all is over. Childish simplicity! Even though the body be turned into dust, Almighty God can raise it up again from the dust. And even though the body

were scattered like so much dust to the four winds of the heavens, God will be able to raise that body to life again in spite of it all.

2. Some people laugh at pious Christians when they hurt their bodies by fasting and praying and kneeling in the church or by heat or cold. Perhaps you, too, sometimes wondered when the saints treated their bodies so cruelly; yes, even at times scourged them until the blood flowed; or when they gave their bodies over to the torturers to be put to death. Now you can better understand why they did all this. The saints looked farther than most shortsighted people of this world. They looked into eternity. They knew very well: body and soul easily get into battle with each other. The body would like to become master over the soul and the soul over the body. Therefore the saints helped the soul not the body. True and wise Christians imitate their example. For they know that if we hurt the body by fasting and mortification and self-denial in this world, we do good to the soul. That is what St. Francis of Assisi did. He called his body an old donkey. He treated it, too, like an old, stubborn donkey. He punished it and made it fast, until it gave him peace and obeyed him willingly. That was very reasonable of him, and he will not have to feel sorry for what he did when the last day arrives; his body will shine like the sun on the day of the resurrection.

3. Be reasonable, therefore, and consider well: the Christian may not be a servant of his belly, but must be a servant of God. We live not to eat, but we eat to live. Do not forget either, that your body is one day to take its place among the saints of Heaven, and to appear before the throne of God. Therefore keep your bodies holy and do not abuse them for sin. Watch over your tongues, that they speak no sinful words, that they utter no curses and uncharitable conversations! Watch over the eyes of the body, that they do not look upon sinful objects! Do not desecrate your bodies by intemperate eating and drinking! But espe-

cially do not desecrate them by commiting impure actions! For whosoever does these things sows the seeds of death in his body.

LESSON XXXVII.

Purgatory.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is Purgatory? L. XXXVII, Q. 414.
2) Can the faithful on earth help the souls in Purgatory? L. XXXVII, Q. 415.

Preparation. Dear children, St. Paul says: "It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment" (Heb. ix, 27.) After death the body is laid in the grave to await the resurrection. Let us review briefly what we have learned concerning the resurrection of the body. *(Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson.)*—What happens to the soul after it leaves the body?—It is judged. What is this judgment called, which we have to undergo immediately after death? —Why does Christ judge men immediately after death? —After the judgment is finished, the sentence is passed: reward or punishment. Three places are prepared for the soul; three doors look out upon the place of judgment. Each door leads to a different place— to Heaven, to Hell, to Purgatory. What are the rewards or punishments appointed for men's souls after the Particular Judgment?

Aim. Today we are going to inquire into the following questions: For whom does the door to Purgatory open? How can we help the poor souls in Purgatory?

Presentation. Over seventeen hundred years ago in Carthage, a city of Africa, a wealthy lady only twenty-two years of age and four other companions were thrown into prison for professing to be Christians. This lady's name was Perpetua. She herself describes the events that took place up to the eve of her martyr-

dom. These five heroes of Christ's Church were finally scourged in a most cruel manner; then they were led into the circus or amphitheater at Carthage, where wild animals were set upon the men, and a savage cow upon the women. After having been terribly wounded by these ferocious animals, these heroic men and women were beheaded on the seventh of March, in the year 203. Perpetua's father was a pagan, her mother and two brothers were Christians. Another brother, named Dinocrates, died at the tender age of seven years of a terrible cancer, which had eaten into his cheek.

Now then while Perpetua was in prison awaiting the day of her execution, she had several visions. "A few days after receiving the sentence," she writes, "when we were all together in prayer, I happened to name Dinocrates, at which I was astonished, because I had not before had him in my thoughts. And I at that moment knew that I ought to pray for him. This I began to do with great fervor and sighing before God. And the same night I had the following vision. I saw Dinocrates coming out of a dark place, where there were many others, very hot and thirsty. His face was dirty, his complexion pale, with the ulcer in his face, of which he died at seven years of age. And it was for him that I prayed. There seemed a great distance between him and me, so that it was impossible for us to come to each other. Near him stood a vessel filled with water, whose brim was higher than the statue of an infant. He tried to drink, but he could not reach it. This grieved me very much and I awoke. By this I knew that my brother was in pain, but I trusted in God with tears, day and night, that He would grant my request. As I continued to do till we were removed to the damp prison: being destined for a public show in the circus on the feast day of the emperor, Caesar Geta. The day we were in the stocks (that is, in the wooden machine with many holes, in which the prisoner's feet were fastened

and stretched to a great distance, in order to increase the pain), I had this vision. I saw the place, which I had before beheld dark, now luminous and bright; and Dinocrates, with his body very clean and well clad, refreshing himself and instead of his wound a scar only. I awoke and I knew that he was relieved from his pain."

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, these were wonderful visions, which St. Perpetua was allowed to see in her prison cell. Her little brother, Dinocrates, had died at the tender age of seven years. How did he now appear to his saintly sister? He was in a dark and filthy cell. His face was dirty, his eyes were inflamed, his cheek still covered with the ulcer, of which he had died. What did this vision mean?—St. Perpetua understood its meaning. Perhaps Dinocrates had committed venial sins while on earth. He had perhaps told little lies, stolen little things, been stubborn and disobedient to his parents, quarreled with his brothers and sisters. He died with these sins on his soul. Surely he did not deserve to go to Hell for these sins, because they only go to Hell, who die with mortal sins on their soul. Neither was he fit for Heaven. "For nothing defiled enters Heaven." These venial sins must first be washed away, before he may enter the company of the angels and saints. Therefore God said to him: "Dinocrates, depart from Me into Purgatory! Remain there until all your venial sins and faults are burned away!" Who then go to Purgatory?—**All those souls go to Purgatory, who die guilty of venial sins.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

b) Perhaps Dinocrates had even committed mortal sins, and although God had forgiven them before this little boy died, still Dinocrates had neglected to do penance for those sins. Or if he had only been guilty of venial sins during his earthly life, perhaps he still owed God some satisfaction for his sins. For every sin he committed, he deserved to be punished by God. And

since he did not punish himself while on earth, God now punished him in Purgatory. He must remain there until all the debt of punishment has been paid. He will not be permitted to leave the prison until the last penny has been paid. Who then go to Purgatory?—**All those souls go to Purgatory who die without having satisfied for the punishment due to their sins.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) When Perpetua saw her little brother for the first time in vision she knew that he was suffering very much. How do you know that?—By his whole appearance. He was pale, his eyes were red, the ulcer was still on his cheek. He was suffering a burning thirst, and he tried in vain to reach the water in that little vessel. He was in a state of suffering and pain. He was in Purgatory. **Purgatory is a state in which souls suffer for a time for venial sins and for punishment due to their sins.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

The souls in Purgatory may not see God: that is their greatest suffering. At death their eyes are opened. Now they know how beautiful God is and how happy life is in Heaven. But they may not enter into the joys of Heaven. "Nothing defiled can enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Apoc. xxi, 27.) Therefore those souls suffer just like a person who has a high fever. Such a person tosses about the whole night through on his bed of pain. Every few moments he asks: "Will it be day soon?" The Poor Souls can scarcely wait until the time of their penance is over, and finally the day arrives and eternal light will shine upon them. If they were not immortal they would surely die of homesickness for Heaven and of burning desire for God. This pain burns and tortures these souls like fire. That is why you generally see the Poor Souls represented in pictures imprisoned in a sea of fire. The very sight of this awful torture is enough to make one shudder with fear. St. Thomas Aquinas once said: "There is no difference between the fire of Hell and the fire of Purgatory." And yet, many careless persons say: "O!

venial sins are nothing. If I commit venial sins, I will only go to Purgatory." How foolish these people talk. Never follow their bad example.

d) St. Perpetua had a second vision of her little brother. What did she see this time?—How changed little Dinocrates appeared! What did Perpetua say then?—She knew that he had been released from Purgatory. His soul was purified from all venial sins and he had paid in full the debt of punishment for his sins. His sufferings were over. **Purgatory is a state in which souls suffer for a time.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But why are the souls in Purgatory called "Poor Souls?"—Because they must suffer so much. But really they are rich and fortunate, far richer than all of us together. Why? They are no longer in danger of losing Heaven. And this thought takes away a great deal of the pain and misery of Purgatory. But they will not be really and perfectly happy until they pass through the gates that lead to Paradise, their true home. *(Have the pupils repeat the entire answer together).*

2. But perhaps you have already heard that Luther denied that there is a Purgatory. Even today *Protestants* refuse to believe in a Purgatory. Of course, Luther wants to know better than Christ Himself. Our Blessed Saviour once spoke very plainly about a prison. He said: "Amen, I say to thee, that thou shalt not go out from hence, till thou payest the last farthing" (Matt. v, 25.) What sort of a prison is that?—It can mean only the prison of Purgatory. For in Hell it is impossible any longer to pay anything. The *Jews,* too, believed in Purgatory. For we read in the II book of the Macchabees (xii, 40-46) of the Old Testament, that in a certain battle against the heathens many Jews were killed. Judas Macchabeus, their leader, however, gained the victory. The Jews began to bury their dead countrymen. Then something strange hap-

pened. Under the clothing of the dead Jews who had fallen in battle were found little pictures or statues of false gods (idols.) They had taken them from the pagans, and thereby they had offended God. Thus these soldiers had died with sin upon their souls. Their death was already a punishment for their sins. Then Judas, their general, collected money from the soldiers who had been spared in battle, and sent 12,000 drachmas of silver to Jerusalem, in order to have a sacrifice of satisfaction offered for these dead soldiers. Judas thought well of the resurrection, for he said: "It is a good and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." You see, therefore, that he and the Jews believed in a Purgatory.

Yes, the *Catholic Church* has always believed in Purgatory from the days of Christ and the Apostles. If you were to pay a visit to the Catacombs, those cemeteries of the early Christians, which stretch for miles underground just outside the city of Rome, you would be able to read many inscriptions on the walls and the tombs of the Catacombs, that show very clearly that the early Christians believed just as we believe. The early Christians prayed for their dead relatives and friends. Now if these souls were already in Heaven, they would not need prayers; if they were in Hell, they could no longer be helped. Therefore these Christians believed that their dear departed ones were in a middle place or state between Heaven and Hell, whence they could be released. These Christians believed in Purgatory. We still pray for the dead. Why do we do this? Because we believe in Purgatory. In every Mass the priest says a special prayer called the Memento for the Dead, in which he begs God to be mindful of those who have gone before us with the sign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace. He beseeches God to grant to all of these souls rest in Christ, a place of refreshment, light and peace. Yes, we believe that there is a Purgatory, because God has said so.

3. When Perpetua realized that her little brother

needed help, what did she do?—She began to pray to God most fervently and continued her prayers, until she knew that God had heard her requests. The Church has always taught and believed just as St. Perpetua believed. She has always taught that the faithful on earth can help the children of the Church Suffering in Purgatory. Therefore she asks us, her children, to say prayers for the dear departed ones; to give alms to our needy brethren on earth with the good intention of thereby helping some suffering soul in the flames of Purgatory; to perform some good work or other, for instance to eat less, or not to eat food that we like very much; to endure the toothache or some other suffering with patience and to say: "Dear Lord, I will offer up these pains, this little self-denial, for the sake of the Poor Souls!" We can help the suffering souls also by gaining some indulgence for them, that is, by doing some good work, for instance by reciting some prayer, to which our Holy Father, the Pope, has attached an indulgence, and ask God to give that indulgence to the suffering Souls in Purgatory. But the most powerful means of assisting the Poor Souls is to have the most adorable Sacrifice of the Mass offered for those souls, or to assist devoutly at the Mass and to beg God to free the suffering souls for the sake of the Mass. Hence the pious custom of sending Mass Cards to the home of the dead person instead of flowers, which soon die, and do no good at all to the soul of the dead relative or acquaintance. That is true Christian Charity. **The faithful on earth can help the souls in Purgatory by their prayers, fasts, alms-deeds; by indulgences and by having Masses said for them.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Who go to Purgatory?
   a) those who die in venial sins;
   a) those who still owe temporal punishments for their sins.

2. What is Purgatory?
   a) a state of suffering;
   b) lasting for a time only.
3. We can help the Poor Souls:
   a) by prayers; b) fasts; c) alms-deeds; d) indulgences; e) the Holy Mass.

Synthesis. These are serious truths, that we have learned today. After death comes the judgment. Three doors are opened to the soul after death and the Particular Judgment. What are these three doors? Who go to Purgatory? What kind of a state or place is Purgatory? How long will the soul remain in this prison? How can we know that there is a Purgatory? What does Christ say about Purgatory? Did the holy Roman Catholic Church always believe in Purgatory? How can you show me this? Can we help the Poor Souls in Purgatory? How can we help them? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. There is a middle state between Heaven and Hell, where the souls suffer for a time, who die in venial sins or who have still to pay some temporal punishment for the sins which they have been guilty of. This is what our Catechism teaches about Purgatory. So great is the holiness of God, that He cannot permit any of His children to enter Heaven until full satisfaction has been made to Him for all offences committed against Him. What a terrible evil sin is, not only mortal sin, but even venial sin! How good God's Church is, for reminding her children of the duty of performing penance and mortification for their sins, especially by abstaining from meat on Fridays and by fasting in Lent, by doing acts of self-denial during Advent and the penitential seasons! Let us resolve to obey faithfully the voice of Holy Mother Church, whenever she speaks to us, for she is God's representative on earth.

2. St. Catherine of Bologna was once allowed to see

the souls who were suffering in the flames of Purgatory. She saw a raging fire, which burned even to the inmost soul; it seemed to her as if the flames of Hell could not burn more fiercely. Then she beheld a countless multitude of peoples, as thick as the leaves in the forest, all burning in these terrible flames. She saw there many who had led holy lives on earth, but who were not yet pure enough to be with God. She noticed also many little children there, who had never committed great sins, but only venial sins, such as being a little angry, or quarreling with their brothers and sisters, or disobeying their parents in small matters, and the pain she saw them suffering for their sins in those awful flames was frightful to behold. God permitted St. Catherine to see these things, in order that she might warn us to avoid even the smallest sins, since God punishes them with so much severity.

3. A certain holy man tells us the following story about an aunt of his, who lost her son, for whom she had a special affection. "My aunt was inconsolable for the loss of her dear boy. She wept for him day and night. One day she had a vision. She thought that she saw a company of beautiful boys, all clad in shining garments, and full of joy and happiness. As they passed along she thought her own son might be amongst them, but he was not there. While she was looking for him, she saw him following them, but at a great distance in the rear. He seemed to be walking with great difficulty, as if he were carrying a heavy burden. O, my son! said the fond mother, why are you not in the company of those beautiful youths, and why do you seem so weary and so fatigued?—Look, mother—look at the burden I am carrying. These are the tears that you have shed for me. They have done me no good, but on the contrary, they have kept me from reaching those beautiful youths, whom you see ahead of me. O, my mother! if you weep for me, weep with resignation to the holy will of God. Go and have the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered up

for me, and then this weight will be taken from me, and I shall be able to join those companions who are now so happy." That is often, dear children, a very great mistake, which even good people make. When some one dies, whom they love, and whom they know to have been good, they say: Such a one is surely in Heaven. And thus they *neglect* to pray for such a Poor Soul. Now this is a mistake. You should pray for everybody, no matter how holy they may have been during life, so that God may have mercy on them and take them through Purgatory to Heaven.

LESSON XXXVIII.

Hell.

Catechetical Unit:

What is Hell? L. XXXVII, Q. 413.

Preparation. Dear children, when a man dies, his soul appears before the tribunal of Jesus Christ; but his body is laid in the grave to await the final resurrection on the last day. If that soul is stained with venial sins, or burdened with the debt of temporal punishments due to sins committed on earth, it is condemned to Purgatory. Let us review this great truth of our holy Faith. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.)*—After the General Judgment there will be only Heaven and Hell—everlasting life will begin. Therefore we say in the Apostles' Creed these words: "I believe in life everlasting." Let us think earnestly of this truth today and in the next class.

Aim. Come with me in spirit into Hell, and consider the sufferings of the damned. Our Blessed Lord and Saviour once told a parable in which He speaks of Hell in the clearest terms. It is the parable of Dives and Lazarus.

Presentation. There was once a very wealthy man, Dives, who clothed himself in purple and fine linen and

feasted daily like a glutton. There was also a very poor man, named Lazarus. This unfortunate man was covered all over with sores, and lay at the door of the rich man's house. Gladly would he have satisfied his hunger with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; but no man gave them to him. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The poor man died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, that is, into Heaven. The rich man died, too, and was buried in Hell. While Dives was suffering torments, he raised his eyes from the midst of his prison, and saw Abraham in the distance, and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to me, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame." But Abraham answered: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life time, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And besides between us and thee there is fixed a great chaos, so that they who would pass from hence to thee cannot, nor from thence come hither."

Thereupon Dives said: "Then, father, I beseech thee, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments." And Abraham said to the rich man: "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them." But Dives said: "No, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they would do penance." And Abraham said to him: "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead" (Luke xvi.) *(Show the pupils a large picture of this scene).*

Explanation. 1. a) Dear children, what serious truth does Jesus tell us in this parable?—There is a Hell. Yes, the story says very plainly: "The rich man was buried in Hell." *Christ* speaks of Hell at least twenty times in the Gospels. Give me some examples.

In the parable of the marriage feast the king in his anger says: "Bind his hands and feet, and cast him out into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xxii, 13.) Again the Lord says: "If thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. For it is better for thee to enter life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished" (Mark ix, 42s.) What is the sentence of Christ against the damned at the General Judgment?—"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" **There is a Hell.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

b) *Our own common sense, our reason,* tells us the very same truth. Just think for a moment of Lazarus. This poor man dies. The rich man also dies—and both go to Heaven. What would you say to that?—That is unjust of God! Quite right. The good man deserves a reward, but the wicked man deserves a punishment. So it is, and so it always will be with God; for He is a just God.

c) Therefore *all peoples and even the pagans* have believed in a Hell. Of course, they often had childish notions about Hell. Just listen to this belief of the heathens! A man, named Tantalus, offended the gods grievously. He is, therefore, punished severely in the lower world. He is obliged to stand in cold water up to his neck, and above his head hang many rich and juicy fruits. Nevertheless he must suffer unceasingly a dreadful hunger and thirst. For just as soon as he bends to drink, the water recedes on all sides, and he cannot reach any of it. And if he tries to reach the fruit above his head, immediately the branches pull away. Thus we see how he must suffer.—Here is another belief of the pagans concerning Hell. Sisyphus also had committed a grievous wrong against the gods. He, too, was punished severely for his sin. He is now obliged to push a mighty rock up the side of a moun-

tain in Hell. He must work and torture himself to such an extent, that the perspiration runs in streams down his face. When he has succeeded in raising the rock to the top of the mountain, immediately it slips from his grasp and rolls down the side of the mountain again. And his work begins all over again.—These are indeed strange tales of Hell. But there is, nevertheless, a grain of truth in them. They all tell us, that even the heathens believed in Hell.

2. And yet, there are *many people, who deny that there is a Hell.* They laugh about Hell and joke about it. Why do they do that? They do not want to live as Christians, therefore, they refuse to believe in Hell. They themselves must acknowledge that if there really is a Hell, they surely deserve to go there. Of course, they do not want to go to Hell, therefore, they deny that there is a Hell. A person gladly believes what he likes to be true. But what good does that do?—Just say to the sun: "Depart from the heavens!"—The sun pays no attention to what you say about it. It remains there just the same, and continues to shine as before. And so, too, even though a person were to say a hundred thousand times: "There is no Hell!"—Hell pays no attention to what that person says. It continues to burn as fiercely as ever, and that wicked person will burn there some day. Then he will no longer feel like laughing and joking about Hell.

"But really one knows nothing for certain about Hell," says another person, "for nobody ever returned from Hell!" Did not Christ tell us clearly, that there is a Hell?—"And nobody ever returned from Hell"—what do you say to that?—That is true. But do you think that the damned are in Hell, just for the purpose of being sent to us as special messengers?—That is the very thing that is so terrible about Hell—the fact, that no one ever comes out of Hell again. And even though some one were to return from Hell, what good would that do?—What did the rich man in Hell say to Abraham?—"I pray thee, father Abraham, send

Lazarus into my father's house, for I have five brethren there, to warn them, so that they may not come into this place of torments!" What did Abraham answer to that?— "They have Moses and the Prophets: let them hear them." The rich man replied: "Father Abraham, they will not believe them!" But Abraham answered: "If they will not believe Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe anyone, who returns from the dead!" Yes, so it is; whoever does not want to believe in Hell, will not believe even though some one from Hell were to stand before them and tell them about it.

3. Why was the rich man, Dives, condemned to Hell?—While living in this world he did not care about Almighty God; therefore neither did God care for him when he died. Sin was his daily bread, as it were. He lived only for the pleasures of the body, and very seldom, if ever, thought of the life beyond the grave. He had no love for his neighbor. How do you know that? —Thus he lived and died, and went to eternal perdition. He committed many mortal sins; he was dead in the sight of God on account of his wicked life. However, in order to be sent to Hell, it is not necessary to be as wicked as Dives. If at death there is only one mortal sin on your soul, that sin will draw the soul downwards into Hell, and be lost forever. Who then are sent to Hell?—**The wicked are condemned to Hell.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.)* To be sure, Hell is not the same for all souls. Every person will receive punishment according to his sins: one mortal sin—one Hell; two mortal sins—two Hells; a hundred mortal sins—a hundredfold Hell!

4. Let us now ask the rich man in Hell what he is obliged to suffer. We hear him complaining: "I am suffering great pain in these flames." Do you hear? —There are flames of *fire* in Hell. Yes, there is an immense sea of flames in Hell, and the damned are buried in that sea of fire. St. Lawrence was slowly burned or roasted to death on a red hot gridiron. It is

enough to make one shudder at the very thought of those awful tortures. What then must the fire of Hell be! Christ Himself says that the damned will be "salted with fire" (Mark ix, 48.) Hell-fire is a fire that penetrates marrow and bone; a fire that cooks and boils like a raging furnace-fire, which changes the damned into fire. Children and often grown up people imagine that Hell-fire is an ordinary fire. No, indeed, Hell-fire is not like the fire of earth, but a mysterious fire, which the anger of God has lighted. It is a fire which burns and yet spreads darkness; a fire which burns and yet does not consume the damned. That is what the damned must suffer. *(Use the blackboard; see diagram below).*

5. Some people say to themselves: "Well, I shall not be alone in Hell; there are many companions there!" They are right; but what *company!* The rich man must have enjoyed that company very little, for otherwise he would not have complained so bitterly and so piteously. Let us look a little more closely at this company in Hell. There the outcasts of society are gathered together. There you can find no love anymore, but only hate. There you can hear no words of comfort and consolation and friendship, but only cursing and blaspheming. "Thou cursed seducer! Thou false, poisonous snake! Thou art the cause, that I have lost my innocence, and that I have been condemned to Hell! Curses upon thee and upon me!" The devils are there, too. When the damned howl with pain and woe, the devils laugh at them with fiendish glee and say: "Pray, does the fire hurt thee?"—And Satan taunts them, saying: "See, thou hast served me faithfully. Now I will reward thee: drink with me out of the fiery cup of the Divine anger!" (Apoc. xiv, 10.) To be sure a very pleasant company indeed!

6. Dives led a very careless, sinful life while on earth. He was deaf to the voice of God speaking to him in his *conscience.* But in Hell his conscience has awakened at last. Therefore he complained so bitter-

ly: "Oh, father Abraham!" Now the thoughts of despair have come into his soul like fiery serpents: "Oh! if only I had given to Lazarus out of the abundance of my wealth! If only I had prayed a little more! If only I had listened to the voice of my conscience! If only I had served God faithfully! Now I could have been in Heaven! For a miserable, short-lived pleasure I have lost the eternal joys of Heaven! Oh! miserable, unhappy me. How could I have been so foolish! But, alas! it is too late—too late!"—Do you see, dear children, this is the "worm that never dieth"—the bad conscience of the damned.

7. One thing strikes me especially in the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man once had all that his heart desired—but over there in the other life, he would have been very happy to receive even one drop of water. What does he say?—"Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to me to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue!" Oh, how easily satisfied he has become now in the flames of Hell! But he will not receive even a drop of water. That, too, tells us a great truth—in Hell there is no lessening of pain, but forever the same sufferings and tortures. What then do the damned suffer in Hell?—**Hell is a state, to which the wicked are condemned and in which they are in dreadful torments.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

8. What we have heard up to now of the sufferings of the rich man is indeed dreadful; but the most dreadful of all is still to come. Do you know what the most terrible of all the terrors is for Dives?—God has called out to him in tones of thunder those awful words: "Depart from Me, thou cursed!" When Jesus hung dying on the cross, He cried out: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—What terrible sufferings of soul Jesus must have endured on that occasion! Of course, God never forsook Jesus even for a moment. And yet, the Saints believe that on that occasion our Blessed Saviour suffered the tortures of the damned in Hell—

the loss of the sight of God. Whoever has God, has everything; whoever loses God, loses everything. Our dear Lord has a look of love even for the poorest worm in the dust; but for the damned in Hell there is no love anymore, no grace, no mercy. Do you know why?—God cannot do otherwise. For as a man dies, so he remains forever. Whoever dies in sin, remains in sin forever. Such a person's heart is hardened in wickedness; he cannot love God any more—he can only hate God. Therefore God cannot love such a person any more—He can only hate him. That, therefore, is the life of the damned—a life without grace and joy, a life full of sufferings in Hell. **Hell is a state to which the wicked are condemned and in which they are deprived of the sight of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

9. There is one more thing left for us to consider. What is it that makes Hell to be Hell?—Remember what Abraham said to Dives: "Between thee and us there is fixed a great chaos, so that they who would pass from hence to thee cannot, nor from thence come hither." Yes, Heaven and Hell never come together; for Hell will last forever. If that were not so, Hell would no longer be Hell. Christ Himself has said that more than once. "Hell is an unquenchable fire" (Mark ix, 45.) "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matt. xxv, 41.) St. John says also: "The smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever" (Apoc. xiv, 11.) "They shall be tormented day and night forever" (Apoc. xx, 10.) For all eternity—how long is that? That is what Holy Mother Church has always taught, and so too have Catholics always believed. That must, therefore, be true. I cannot change a single word of God's revelation. **The wicked in Hell shall be deprived of the sight of God and are in dreadful torment for all eternity.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard. Have the pupils repeat the entire answer together as it is in the Catechism).*

The great Italian poet, Dante, described the torments

of Hell in a beautiful poem. Over the gates of Hell Dante wrote the words: "Leave ye all hope behind, all ye that enter here!" Therefore, whoever enters Hell will never leave it again. That is enough to drive anyone to despair. I once saw a man in prison, who was a murderer and a robber and who was waiting for the death sentence. The criminal trembled all over and was bathed in perspiration at the mere thought of death. He was sunk in deepest despair. So too, and much more miserable is life in Hell—like an eternal dread of death and a never ending despair.

Write on the blackboard:

1. There is a Hell—Christ—reason—all peoples.
2. Who are condemned to Hell?—The wicked, who die in mortal sin.
3. Sufferings of Hell:
   a) pains of fire;
   b) company of the wicked and devils;
   c) remorse of conscience;
   d) tortures of all kinds;
   e) loss of the sight of God.
4. Hell—for all eternity.

Synthesis. In Hell there is nothing but suffering and pain for all eternity—no joy, no happiness. The rich man must experience all that forever. You ought to remember that great truth always. Is there a Hell? How do you know that? What does Christ say about Hell? What does our reason say? What do the pagans believe about Hell? Who is condemned to Hell? What are some of the punishments or sufferings of Hell? Which is the greatest of all the sufferings of Hell? How long will all these sufferings last? How do you know that? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. The Saints of God had a terror of Hell. St. Francis Borgia on a certain occasion became very sad. Some one asked him the reason for his sadness. The saint answered: "I was just thinking of

Hell." St. Jerome left the world and fled into the desert. He wept bitter tears and scourged his body until the blood flowed. Why did he do these things?—For fear of Hell. We, too, ought to be afraid of Hell; for we are never secure against Hell-fire.

2. The Saints thought of Hell especially in time of temptations. St. John Chrysostom hung a picture of Hell in his room. Whenever an evil thought came into his mind, he would look at the picture of Hell. Thus he drove away all temptations easily. When the fires of impurity burn within you, think of Hell-fire!—A hermit, Martinian by name, had been leading a holy life for many years. The devil sent a wicked woman to him to tempt him. The holy man left the cell, in which he passed his time, and going outside in silence, he gathered together some dry wood, lighted it and placed his feet in the fire. Overcome by pain he cried out aloud. The woman heard his cries and hastened out. But what was she obliged to see?—The hermit lay on the ground, his feet burned terribly, and he cried bitterly. Then he explained to her: "Before I would begin to walk in the path of sin, that leads to Hell, I wanted to know whether I could endure the pains of Hell-fire." The woman was so touched by this act of the Saint, that she became converted and died in the grace and fear of God.—You, too, dear children, ought to think of the eternal flames of Hell whenever the flames of passion burn within your hearts. Then you will lose all desire for sin. Do you know why I continually warn you against mortal sin?—Mortal sin is the greatest misfortune and evil, for it can make us unhappy for all eternity in Hell.

3. Just examine your consciences as to whether you have ever been guilty of mortal sins. If you ever committed a single mortal sin, what did you deserve?—Why did not God permit you to die in that sin?—I do not know. I can only say that God is merciful. Or are you perhaps even now in mortal sin?—Then the abyss of Hell has already opened at your feet; the devils

are already waiting for your soul. Cast the poison of sin out of your soul! Make an act of perfect contrition with me: "My Jesus, my all, have mercy on me!" All of you ought to take this little forget-me-not with you, the beautiful saying of St. Bernard: "Descend often into Hell during life, so that at death you may not be obliged to descend there!"

LESSON XXXIX.

Heaven.

Catechetical Unit:

What is Heaven? L. XXXVII, Q. 420.

Preparation. Dear children, life everlasting is found in Heaven or in Hell. Of course in Hell life is like an unending, an everlasting death. Let us review what we learned about Hell. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson.)*—What we know concerning Hell we know from Christ Himself. But the Saviour often spoke also about Heaven. He calls it Paradise. "To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise," Jesus said to the Good Thief on the cross. He calls Heaven also the house of His Father. "In My Father's house there are many mansions" (John xiv, 2.) He calls it eternal life. "The just will go into eternal life" (Matt. xxv, 46.) From the very names by which Heaven is called we can surmise the fullness of joy and happiness that must be in Heaven. We shall now see this even more clearly.

Aim. Let us in spirit ascend into Heaven and consider the happiness of the blessed.

Presentation. Let us accompany a soul into Heaven. Not the slightest spot of sin is on that soul; it is as pure and white as a lily. In a moment it is judged. But that soul is not afraid. It hears from the lips of the Judge these happy words: "Thou good and faithful soul, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

At that moment the Guardian Angel takes hold of

that soul, and raises it upwards, far away from earth, and soars heavenwards. That blessed soul hears all of a sudden singing and rejoicing and jubilation from many thousands of voices and tongues. What beautiful hymns and what mysterious tones are these?—They are the songs of praise of the angels and the saints before the throne of God. Overflowing with joy the soul listens and murmurs softly: "It is good to be here!'" But that is only the beginning. Now the gates of Heaven are thrown open. That soul's eyes are all blinded by the wondrous light and glory that issue forth from the portals of Heaven. The happy soul looks and looks and can never grow weary with looking at all this splendor and glory. And now the souls of the dear ones approach, perhaps father and mother, brothers and sisters. O! what a meeting. What greetings and congratulations and rejoicing! But all this is as yet only the beginning.

Again the Guardian Angel takes hold of that soul and higher and higher they mount upwards. There are the holy penitents and confessors, all the holy virgins and martyrs, the holy Apostles. Higher and higher the soul and the angel ascend till they come to the army of the holy angels. Everywhere new greetings, new jubilations, new love. Is it possible to go even higher?—Yes, high above all the angels and the saints there rises a throne, and on the throne sits a Virgin, resplendent like the sun, and a crown of twelve stars sparkles in glory on her head. Who is this woman?—It is Mary, Heaven's Queen. How good the Mother of God is! Full of love she lifts up the happy soul and presses it to her motherly heart and says: "My dear child!"

Again the angel takes hold of the soul; higher, ever higher they ascend into Heaven. There surrounded by an ocean of light the God-Man, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is enthroned. Adoring the soul falls down, and in love and thanksgiving, it kisses the glorified

wounds of the Saviour. At that very moment a wonderful power streams through the soul. It is as though it were changed into another being and the soul is allowed to look at the thrice Holy God face to face. The soul swims, as it were, in a sea of happiness, and this happiness never ceases, never for all eternity. I can speak no further.

That is Heaven. But what I have told you is only like a weak candle light as compared with the mighty sunlight.

Explanation. 1. When the soul of that saint, whom we have been considering, left the body, there was great weeping and mourning and lamenting. Father and mother and brothers and sisters were sad because death had taken away one out of the family circle. Parting causes pain. But after all, this is only a farewell, that some day will give place to a reunion, to a happy meeting in Heaven if all live well and die well. The soul will find its dear ones again in Heaven. What happiness will there not be then in Heaven! What a joyous meeting! And henceforth there will be no separation forever! Yes, as St. John says: "In Heaven death shall be no more" (Apoc. xxi, 30.) "The just," says Christ, "shall enter into life everlasting." In the heavenly Jerusalem, that wonderful city of the saints, there flows on forever and forever the river of life, clearer than the crystal. On the banks of this river, on either side, grows the tree of life, and all that eat of the fruit of that tree will live forever. There is no night in Heaven, but eternal day. Our Catechism says: **Heaven is a state of everlasting life.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. What happiness that soul must have felt, when the Guardian Angel led it from the judgment-seat of Christ upwards into Heaven! What does it see there?—It beholds the *Heaven of the Saints.* With joy unspeakable the saints of God greet the soul, and in turn the soul may say to the saints: "Hail, dear brothers and sis-

ters!" For the blessed soul now belongs to the great family of the Blessed in Heaven. Just as the stars twinkle and sparkle in the blue heavens on a summer's night, so too, the soul together with the saints will henceforth shine forever before the throne of God in the splendor of holiness. But the Guardian Angel leads the soul still higher into the *Heaven of the Angels.* In happiness and joy beyond measure the soul is permitted to listen to the angels' eternal "Allelujah!—Praise God, the Lord!" and to their joyous song: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God!" O! what happiness does not the blessed soul experience when it is allowed for the first time to see *Mary,* the Queen of Angels and of Saints. What delight, when it hears from her lips the sweet words: "My dear child!" If there were nothing else in Heaven but this alone, this would be joy enough for the soul. But all this is as yet very little. Now the real Heaven begins—*the vision of God.* The soul sees Jesus in the splendor of His Divinity and at the same time the One God in the Three Divine Persons. Do you know what that means—to see God face to face?

As long as we live on earth we can only think of how God is, and that in a very imperfect manner. The world round about us shows only the footprints of God, as it were. Can we then see much of God? No. But how different is not all this, if we see not merely the footprints of some one, but that person himself, face to face! Then we begin really to see, for we see the person face to face. In Heaven the soul sees God as we see one another—face to face. In Heaven the soul sees God in all His splendor and glory and majesty. What then is Heaven?—**Heaven is a state of everlasting life, in which we see God face to face.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

The soul looking upon God, face to face, is filled with a burning love for Him. It cannot think of anything else; it cannot wish for anything else; it cannot speak of anything else, except God, God, God alone. The soul in Heaven wishes only one thing—that is, to be able to

love God more and more. If you place a piece of iron in the fire, it begins to get red hot, to glow through and through. The fire enters into the iron, penetrates it through and through, and communicates its own glow to the iron. So too, is it in regard to God and the saints in Heaven. The soul in Heaven is set afire with the love of God, and loving Him is happy beyond anything that I can tell; the soul swims, as it were, in an ocean of joy and delight.

3. Jesus once ascended Mount Thabor. Peter and James and John were with Him. Suddenly He was wonderfully transfigured or changed before their eyes. His face shone like the sun; His eyes flashed like the lightning; His garments became whiter than the newly fallen snow. Moses and Elias appeared beside Him. And some of the heavenly brightness and glory of Jesus passed over to Moses and Elias, and they were made like to Christ in splendor and brightness and glory. Peter was beside himself with astonishment and joy. In his happiness he cried out: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!" He meant to say: "Lord I should like to be here forever. I would be perfectly happy!" St. Paul once was permitted to look into Heaven. When he saw the glory of God and of the saints, he cried out: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. ii, 9.) O! how wonderfully beautiful and lovely must not the saints of God be in Heaven, when the glory of God shines upon them and changes them, so that they become more and more like to God Himself! **Heaven is a state in which we are made like to God in glory.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. That happy soul, that I have been telling you about, most likely had to endure many sufferings and pains, while on earth before it was permitted to enter into Heaven. Why the whole world is filled with misery and woe. Often enough you have prayed in the prayer called the Salve Regina (Hail, Holy Queen): "To thee

we cry, poor banished children of Eve, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears!" Yes, life on earth is for most people a real Purgatory. But in Heaven all that will be no more. St. John says: "God will wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, no crying, nor sorrow shall be anymore, for the former things are passed away" (Apoc. xxi, 4).

A little girl once thought that Heaven was something after this fashion. This little child only four years old had a very wicked and angry father. Sometimes the father would send the little girl to the store to buy tobacco for him. However, as many children do, this little child forgot at times and tarried on the way, to watch other children at play. Thus she would often come home late. Then the father would begin to curse and swear and scold and beat the little girl. The child would become frightened and trembled and hardly dared to cry. Now one day the child became very sick. The mother, who, too, had to suffer a great deal from the father, stood at the bedside of the little sufferer. She said to her: "Dear Mary, do not be afraid to die. But when you die and go to Heaven, pray that I, too, may soon follow you!" The sick child answered: "Yes, dear mother, I will do as you say. I shall pray that you may soon come to Heaven, and that Charles and Rose, too, will come!" But the mother said: "Do you not want to pray for your father, too?"—The little girl thought for a moment, and then said: "No, for then I would have to go to the store for father, to buy tobacco, and then I would get whipped by him!"—Dear children, many people imagine that in Heaven things are just like on earth; and that persons, who have to suffer much on earth, will also have to suffer much in Heaven. No, no; over there, in Heaven, there is no suffering any more, no pain, but only joy and happiness and delight without measure.

Without doubt the soul that went to Heaven, also had many a joy and happiness in this world. But even

the sweetest joys of earth have a little bitterness in them. How long will that joy last?—It is only a short sunshine. Sorrow follows upon joy. And even though a person were happy all through his earthly life, he knows very well, that with death there will be an end to his happiness. Many a person builds the most beautiful castles in the air. Then death comes and destroys all. Now if things were so in Heaven, Heaven would not be Heaven. Do you know what it is that makes Heaven to be Heaven?—What makes Hell to be Hell, is the fact that it is eternal. And what makes Heaven to be Heaven is eternity. That Heaven will last forever we know from Christ's own words: "The just will enter into life everlasting!" Eternal life—blessed word! The saints in Heaven no longer can lose Heaven. After thousands of years have passed, the joys of Heaven begin all over again. **Heaven is a state in which we enjoy eternal happiness.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard. Have the pupils repeat the entire answer together as it is in the Catechism).*

5. Now I have a question to ask the curious: Do we all receive the same place in Heaven?—No, that cannot be; for otherwise God would not be just. Our place in Heaven depends upon the grace of God and our ownselves. Here is a person, who has served God faithfully for fifty years, and goes to Heaven. Here is another person, who is converted only upon his deathbed, and at the last moment slips into Heaven. Will both be rewarded in the same way?—Will a child, who dies immediately after Baptism be as happy as a holy martyr, that dies in torture for the love of God?—No, for St. Paul says: "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (I Cor. iii, 8.) "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who sows in blessings shall also reap in blessings" (II Cor. ix, 6).

And yet, the heavenly joys are the same for all. How can that be?—See, here are two children who draw from the one well: the one has a big pail, the

other only a small cup. Both of them draw from the same well, but each one does not draw the same amount of water. Or an artist and a child go to visit the picture gallery. Both of them enjoy themselves at the sight of the beautiful pictures. But the artist has much more pleasure than the child, because he can understand the pictures much better. So it is in Heaven: all the saints may see God face to face, and are happy at the sight. But not all draw the same amount of happiness from the vision of God in Heaven. The higher one has risen in grace in the life on earth, the higher will he rise in glory and happiness in the eternal life of Heaven.

6. But I have a little difficulty. Will you not be sad, when you see that your brother or sister has a higher place in Heaven than you have?—O, no! for in Heaven there is no jealousy. See, here are two children, who have received new dresses for Christmas. The younger child has received a smaller dress than the older one. Now do you think that the younger child will be jealous of the older child because it has received a smaller dress?—No, for the smaller child will say: "Why the larger dress does not fit me at all!" So it is in Heaven: there joy exists without jealousy.

Write on the blackboard:

Heaven— { everlasting life; vision of God face to face; sharing in God's glory; everlasting happiness.

Synthesis. What I have related to you today is only a little drop out of a sea of heavenly joys, only a crumb, as it were, of the heavenly banquet. But do not let these crumbs be lost! What is Heaven? Can we understand the happiness of Heaven fully? What does St. Paul say of the joys of Heaven? Whom do we see in Heaven? Are there any sorrows in Heaven? What is it, that makes Heaven really to be Heaven? Will every one share equally in the happiness of Heaven? Why

will there be no envy and jealousy in Heaven? We can remember the sufferings and the joys in the other world in this way: in Purgatory there is much suffering, little joy—for a time only; in Hell there is nothing but suffering and no joy—for all eternity; in Heaven there is nothing but joy and no suffering—for all eternity. *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism; assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Heaven—that is the magic word, that makes saints. Why did the Apostles leave all things and follow Christ? Why did millions of martyrs gladly endure all sorts of tortures and sufferings? Why did the virgins and confessors of all times and peoples and countries preserve their bodies and souls holy so carefully? Why have the saints scourged their bodies by such severe penance and self-denial? Because they all thought of this great truth: "What matters it, if I lose everything, but if only I gain Heaven!" For Heaven is worth everything.

2. What must we do to get to Heaven?—We must become saints. For in Heaven there are only saints. "Nothing defiled entereth into the kingdom of Heaven" (Apoc. xxi, 27.) As long as there is even a tiny speck of sin upon your soul, as long as you have still to suffer the least punishment for your sins, there is no kingdom of Heaven for you. But then it must be very hard to get to Heaven?—Yes, of course it is; it requires pains and effort to get to Heaven. "The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and only the violent bear it away" (Matt. xi, 12.) Without a struggle there is no victory; without victory there is no crown. St. John once saw the saints in Heaven. They all carried palm branches in their hands. This tells us that only martyrs can get to Heaven. We must all become martyrs by a holy, Christian life, by a life of sacrifice and sufferings for the love of God. But do not lose courage! Many have already fought the good fight, have ended the journey and have received the crown from the hand of God. Therefore forward! Each day take a few steps higher

upwards, heavenwards. I shall see which one of you will receive the most beautiful crown of victory in Heaven; for we hope to meet again in Heaven. Often ascend into Heaven while in this world, so that at death you may be permitted to ascend there in reality. Often renew this resolution: "I am resolved to get to Heaven, cost what it may!" Often think of the four last things: death, judgment, Hell, Heaven! "In all thy works consider thy last end, and thou wilt not sin forever" (Wisdom vii, 40.) Time is short—eternity is long. Always remember these words of Christ: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul, or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels: and then will He render to every man according to his works."

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